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BOOK OF THE BUSHVELD



BY SIR PERCY FITZPATRICK



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Lucile Howe

with love & best wishes
from E. Peers.

Glencourt S. A.

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JOCK OF THE BUSHVELD



"JOCK."

JOCK OF THE BUSHVELD

BY

SIR PERCY FITZPATRICK

ILLUSTRATED BY

E. CALDWELL

SCHOOL EDITION, ABRIDGED



LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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1908

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DEDICATION

*It was the youngest of the High Authorities
who gravely informed the Inquiring
Stranger that*

“Jock belongs to the Likkle People!”

*That being so, it is clearly the duty, no
less than the privilege, of the
Mere Narrator to*

DEDICATE

The Story of Jock

to

*Those Keenest and Kindest of Critics, Best
of Friends, and Most Delightful
of Comrades*

The Likkle People

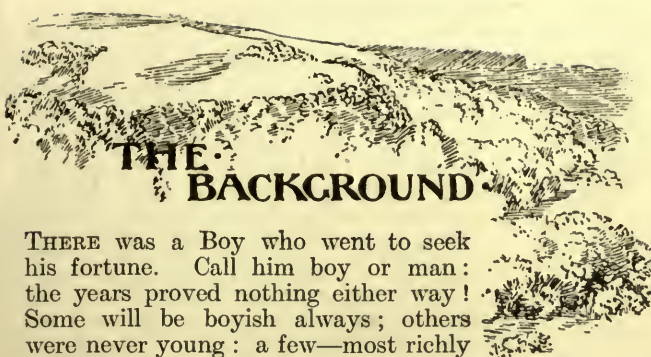
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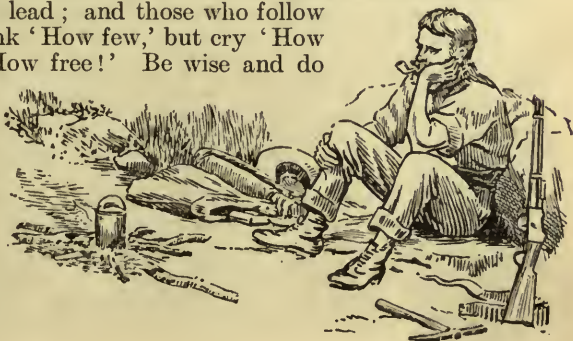




THE BACKGROUND

THERE was a Boy who went to seek his fortune. Call him boy or man: the years proved nothing either way! Some will be boyish always; others were never young: a few—most richly dowered few—are man and boy together. He went to seek his fortune, as boys will and should; no pressure on him from about; no promise from beyond. For life was easy there, and all was pleasant, as it may be—in a cage. ‘To-day’ is sure and happy; and there is no ‘to-morrow’—in a cage.

There were friends enough—all kind and true—and in their wisdom they said: “Here it is safe: yonder all is chance, where many indeed are called, but few—so few—are chosen. Many have gone forth; some to return, beaten, hopeless, and despised; some to fall in sight outside; others are lost, we know not where; and ah! so few are free and well. But the fate of numbers is unheeded still; for the few are those who count, and lead; and those who follow do not think ‘How few,’ but cry ‘How strong! How free!’ Be wise and do not venture. Here it is safe: there is no fortune there!”





But there was something stronger than the things he knew, around, without, beyond—the thing that strove within him: that grew and grew, and beat and fought for freedom: that bade him go and walk alone and tell his secret on the mountain slopes to one who would not laugh—a little red retriever; that made him climb and feel his strength, and find an outlet for what drove within.

And thus the end was sure; for of all the voices none so strong as this! And only those others reached him that would chime with it; the gentle ones which said: “We too believe,” and one, a stronger, saying: “Fifty years ago I did it. I would do it now again!”

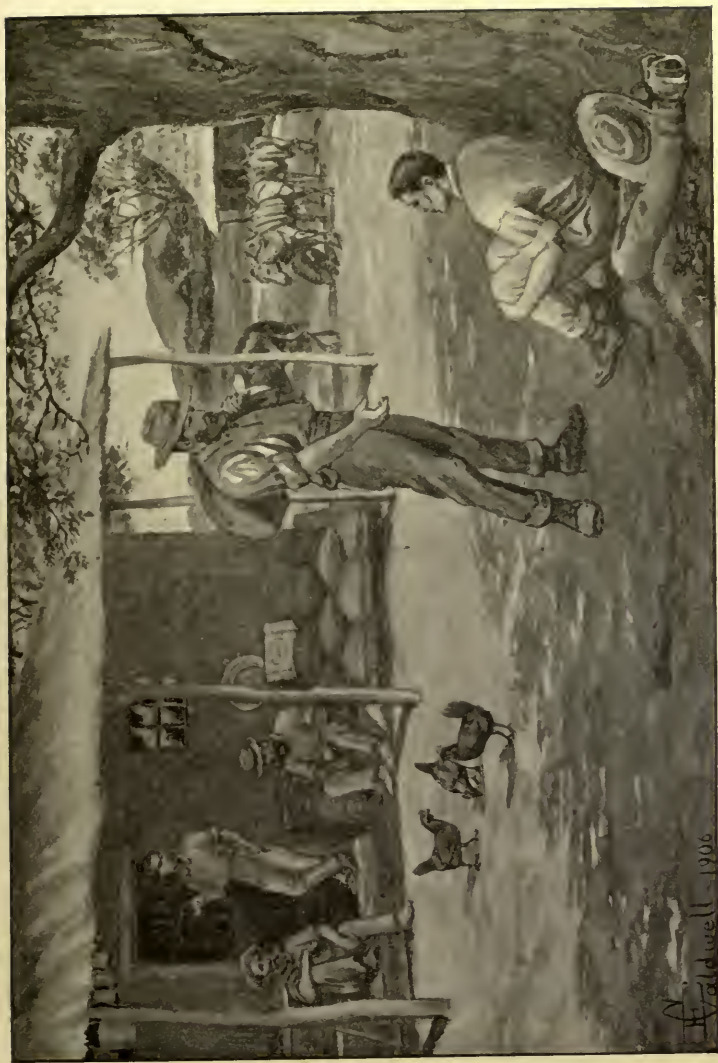
So the Boy set out to seek his fortune, and did not find it; for there was none in the place where he sought. Those who warned him were—in the little—right: yet was he—in the greater—right too! It was not given to him as yet to know that fortune is not in time or place or things; but, good or bad, in the man’s own self for him alone to find and prove.

Time and place and things had failed him; still was effort right; and, when the first was clear beyond all question, it was instinct and not knowledge bade him still go on, saying: “Not back to the cage. Anything but that!”

The days passed, and still there was no work to do. For, those who were there already—hardened men and strong, pioneers who had roughed it—were themselves in straitened case, and it was no place for boys.

Then came a day when there was nowhere else to try. Among the lounging diggers at their week-end deals he stood apart—too shy, too proud to tell the truth; too conscious of it to trust his voice; too hungry to smile as if he did not care! And then





"COME ALONG O' ME"

A. Waldwell 1906



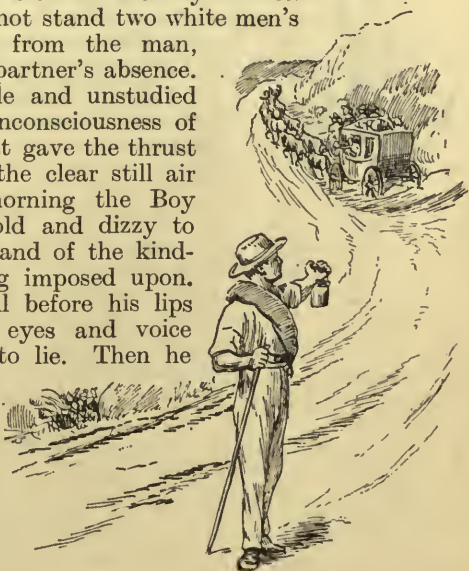
a man in muddy moleskins, with grave face, brown beard, and soft blue eyes, came over to him, saying straight: "Boy, you come along o' me!" And he went.

It was work—hard work. But the joy of it! Shovelling in the icy water, in mud and gravel, and among the boulders, from early dawn to dark. What matter? It was work. It was not for hire, but just to help one who had helped him; to 'earn his grub' and feel he was a man, doing the work of his friend's partner, 'who was away.'

For three full weeks the Boy worked on; grateful for the toil; grateful for the knowledge gained; most grateful that he could by work repay a kindness. And then the truth came out! The kindly fiction fell away as they sat and rested on the day of rest.

"The claim could not stand two white men's grub" had fallen from the man, accounting for his partner's absence.

It was the simple and unstudied truth and calm unconsciousness of where it struck that gave the thrust its force; and in the clear still air of the Sunday morning the Boy turned hot and cold and dizzy to think of his folly, and of the kindness he had so long imposed upon. It was a little spell before his lips would smile, and eyes and voice were firm enough to lie. Then he said gently: If he could be spared—he had not liked to ask before, but now the floods were

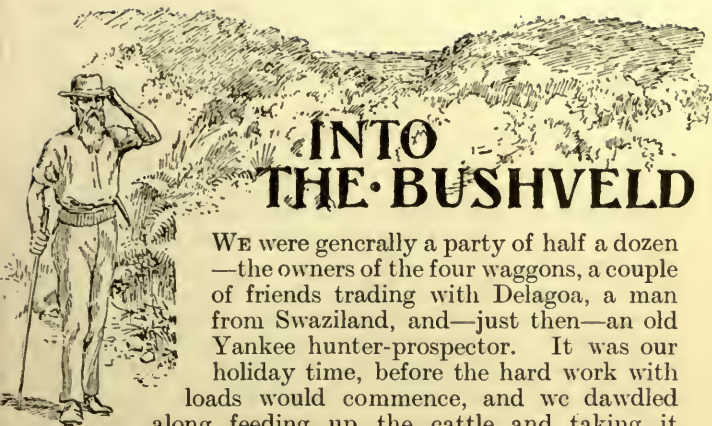


over and the river turned perhaps it could be managed—he would like to go, as there were letters waiting, and he expected news.

Up the winding pathway over rocky ledge and grassy slope, climbing for an hour to the pass, the toil and effort kept the hot thoughts under. At the top the Boy sat down to rest. The green rock-crested mountains stood like resting giants all around: the rivers, silvered by the sun, threaded their ways between: the air was clear, and cool, and still. The world was very beautiful from there.



Far, far below—a brownish speck beside the silver streak—stood the cabin he had left. And, without warning, all came back on him. What he had mastered rose beyond control. The little child that lies hidden in us all reached out—as in the dark—for a hand to hold; and there was none. His arms went up to hide the mocking glory of the day, and, face buried in the grass, he sobbed: “Not worth my food!”



INTO THE BUSHVELD

WE were generally a party of half a dozen—the owners of the four waggons, a couple of friends trading with Delagoa, a man from Swaziland, and—just then—an old Yankee hunter-pro prospector. It was our holiday time, before the hard work with loads would commence, and we dawdled along feeding up the cattle and taking it easy ourselves.

One evening as we were lounging round the camp fire, Robbie, failing to find a soft spot for his head on a thorn log, got up reluctantly to fetch his blankets, exclaiming with a mock tragic air :

“The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.”

We knew Robbie's way. There were times when he would spout heroics, suggested by some passing trifle, his own face a marvel of solemnity the whole time, and only the amused expression in his spectacled grey eyes to show he was poking fun at himself. An indulgent smile, a chuckle, and the genial comment “Silly ass !” came from different quarters ; for Robbie was a favourite. Only old Rocky maintained his usual gravity.

As Robbie settled down again in comfort, the old man remarked in level thoughtful tones : “I reckon the feller as said that was a waster, he chucked it !” There was a short pause in which I, in my ignorance,

began to wonder if it was possible that Rocky did not know the source; or did he take the quotation seriously? Then Robbie answered in mild protest: "It was a gentleman of the name of Hamlet who said it."

"Well, you can bet he was no good, anyhow," Rocky drawled out. "'Jus' my luck!' is the waster's motto!"

"They do say he was mad," Robbie replied, as his face twitched with a pull-your-leg expression, "but he got off a lot of first-class things all the same—some of the best things ever said."

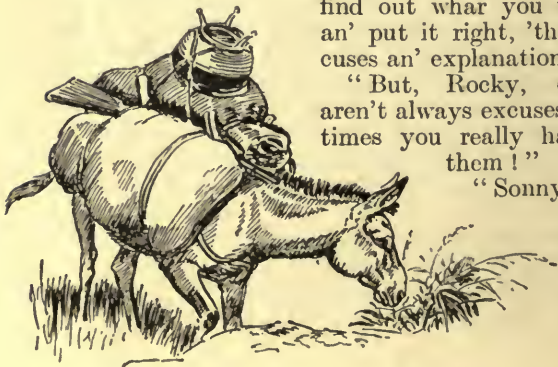
"I da' say; they mostly can. But a man as sets down and blames his luck is no good anyhow. He's got no sand, and got no sense, and got no honesty! It ain't the time's wrong: it's the man! It ain't the job's too big: it's the man's too little!"

"You don't believe in luck at all, Rocky?" I ventured to put in.

"I don't say thar's no such thing as luck—good and bad; but it ain't the explanation o' success an' failure—not by a long way. No, sirree, luck's just the thing any man'd like ter believe is the reason for his failure and another feller's success. But it ain't so. When another man pulls off what you don't, the first thing you got ter believe is it's your own fault; and the last, it's his luck. And you jus' got ter wade in an' find out whar you went wrong, an' put it right, 'thout any excuses an' explanations."

"But, Rocky, explanations aren't always excuses, and sometimes you really have to give them!"

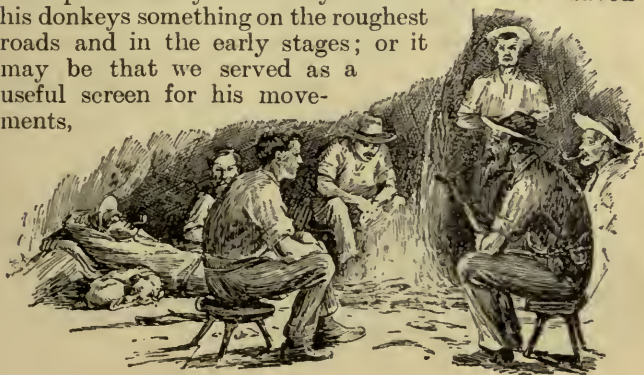
"Sonny, you kin reckon it dead sure t h a r's something w r o n g



'bout a thing that don't explain itself; an' one explanation's as bad as two mistakes—it don't fool anybody worth speaking of, 'cept yerself. You find the remedy; you can leave other folks put up the excuses."

Rocky, known, liked and respected by all, yet intimate with none, was 'going North'—even to the Zambesi, it was whispered—but no one knew where or why. He was going off alone, with two pack-donkeys and not even a boy for company, on a trip of many hundreds of miles and indefinite duration. No doubt he had an idea to work out; perhaps a report of some trader or hunter or even native was his pole-star: most certainly he had a plan, but what it was no living soul would know. That was the way of his kind. With them there was no limit in time or distance, no hint of purpose or direction, no home, no address, no 'people'; perhaps a partner somewhere or a chum, as silent as themselves, who would hear some day—if there was anything to tell.

Rocky had worked near our camp on the Berg. I had known him to nod to, and when we met again at one of the early outspans in the Bush and offered a lift for him and his packs he accepted and joined us, it being still a bit early to attempt crossing the rivers with pack-donkeys. It may be that the 'lift' saved his donkeys something on the roughest roads and in the early stages; or it may be that we served as a useful screen for his movements,



making it difficult for any one else to follow his line and watch him. Anyway, he joined us in the way of those days: that is, we travelled together, and as a rule we grubbed together; yet each cooked for himself and used his own stores, and in principle we maintained our separate establishments. The bag alone was common; each man brought what game he got and threw it into the common stock.

Rocky—in full, Rocky Mountain Jack—had another name, but it was known to few besides the Mining Commissioner's clerk who registered his licences from time to time. "In the Rockies whar I was raised" is about the only remark having deliberate reference to his personal history which he was known to have made; but it was enough on which to found the name by which we knew him.

What struck me first about him was the long Colt's revolver, carried on his hip; and for two days this 'gun,' as he called it, conjured up visions of Poker Flat and Roaring Camp, Jack Hamlin and Yuba Bill of cherished memory; and then the inevitable question got itself asked:

"Did you ever shoot a man, Rocky?"

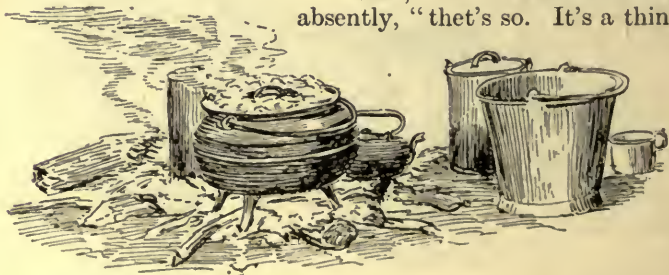
"No, Sonny," he drawled gently, "never hed ter use it yet!"

"It looks very old. Have you had it long?"

"Jus' 'bout thirty years, I reckon!"

"Oh! Seems a long time to carry a thing without using it!"

"Waal," he answered half absently, "thet's so. It's a thing



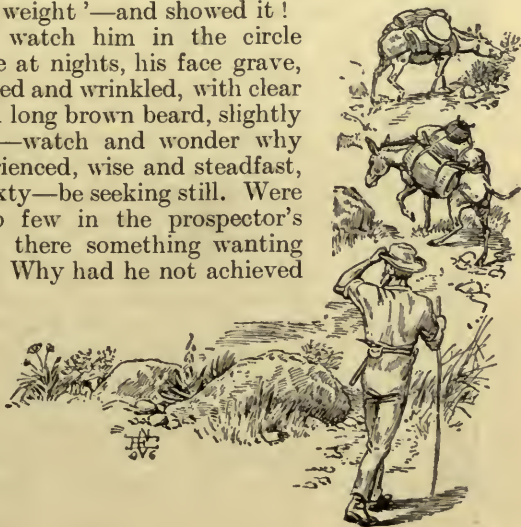
you don't want orfen—but when you do, you want it derved bad ! ”

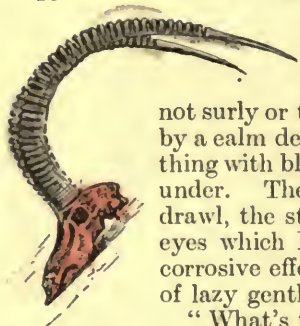
Rocky seemed to me to have stepped into our life out of the pages of Bret Harte. For me the glamour of romance was cast by the Master's spell over all that world, and no doubt helped to make old Rocky something of a hero in the eyes of youth ; but such help was of small account, for the cardinal fact was Rocky himself. He was a man.

There did not seem to be any known region of the earth where prospectors roam that he had not sampled, and yet whilst gleaning something from every land, his native flavour clung to him unchanged. He was silent by habit and impossible to draw ; not helpful to those who looked for short cuts, yet kindly and patient with those who meant to try ; he was not to be exploited, and had an illuminating instinct for what was not genuine. He had ‘no use for short weight ’—and showed it !

I used to watch him in the circle round the fire at nights, his face grave, weather-stained and wrinkled, with clear grey eyes and long brown beard, slightly grizzled then—watch and wonder why Rocky, experienced, wise and steadfast, should—at sixty—be seeking still. Were the prizes so few in the prospector's life ? or was there something wanting in him too ? Why had he not achieved success ?

Many left him respectfully alone ; and something of their feeling came to me





the first time I was with him, when a stupid chatterer talked and asked too much. He was not surly or taciturn, but I felt frozen through by a calm deadly unresponsiveness which anything with blood and brain should have shrunk under. The dull monotone, the ominous drawl, the steady something in his clear calm eyes which I cannot define, gave an almost corrosive effect to innocent words and a voice of lazy gentleness.

"What's the best thing to do following up a wounded buffalo?" was the question. The questions sprung briskly, as only a 'yapper' puts them; and the answers came like reluctant drops from a filter.

"Git out!"

"Yes, but if there isn't time?"

"Say yer prayers!"

"No—seriously—what is the best way of tackling one?"

"Ef yer wawnt to know, thar's only one way: Keep cool and shoot straight!"

"Oh! of course—if *you can*?"

"An' ef you can't," he added, in fool-killer tones, "best stay right home!"

Rocky had no faney notions: he hunted for meat and got it as soon as possible; he was seldom out long, and rarely indeed came back empty-handed. I had already learnt not to be too ready with questions. It was better, so Rocky put it, "to keep yer eyes open and yer mouth shut"; but the results at first hardly seemed to justify the process. At the end of a week of failures and disappointments all I knew was that I knew nothing—a very notable advance it is true, but one quite difficult to appreciate! Thus it came to me in the light of a distinction when one evening, after a rueful confession of blundering made to the party in general, Rocky passed a brief but not unfriendly glance over me and said, "On'y the born fools stays fools."

You'll git ter learn bymbye; you ain't always yappin'!"

It was not an extravagant compliment; but failure and helplessness act on conceit like water on a starched collar: mine was limp by that time, and I was grateful for little things—most grateful when next morning, as we were discussing our several ways, he turned to me and asked gently, "Comin' along, Boy?"

Surprise and gratitude must have produced a touch of effusiveness which jarred on him; for, to the eager exclamation and thanks, he made no answer—just moved on, leaving me to follow. In his scheme of life there was 'no call to slop over.'

There was a quiet unhesitating sureness and a definiteness of purpose about old Rocky's movements which immediately inspired confidence. We had not been gone many minutes before I began to have visions of exciting chases and glorious endings, and as we walked silently along they took possession of me so completely that I failed to notice the difference between his methods and mine. Presently, brimful of excitement and hope, I asked cheerily what he thought we would get. The old man stopped and with a gentle graveness of look and a voice from which all trace of tartness or sarcasm was banished, said, "See, Sonny! If you been useter goin' round like a dawg with a tin it ain't any wonder you seen nothin'. You got ter walk soft an' keep yer head shut!"

In reply to my apology he said that there was "no bell an' curtain in this yere play; you got ter be thar waitin'."

Rocky knew better than I did the extent of his good nature; he knew that in all probability it meant a wasted day; for, with the best will in the world, the beginner is almost certain to spoil sport. It





looks so simple and easy when you have only read about it or heard others talk ; but there are pitfalls at every step. When, in what seemed to me perfectly still air, Rocky took a pinch of dust and let it drop, and afterwards wet one finger and held it up to feel which side cooled, it was not difficult to know that he was trying the wind ; but when he changed direction suddenly for no apparent reason, or when he stopped and, after a glance at the ground, slackened his frame, lost all interest in sport, wind and surroundings, and addressed a remark to me in ordinary tones, I was hopelessly at sea. His manner showed that some possibility was disposed of and some idea abandoned. Once he said " Rietbuck ! Heard us, I reckon," and then turned off at a right-angle ; but a little later on he pointed to other spoor and, indifferently dropping the one word ' Koodoo,' continued straight on. To me the two spoors seemed equally fresh ; he saw hours'—perhaps a whole day's—difference between them. That the rietbuck, scared by us, had gone ahead and was keenly on the watch for us and therefore not worth following, and that the koodoo was on the move and had simply struck across our line and was therefore not to be overtaken, were conclusions he drew without hesitation. I only saw spoor and began to palpitate with thoughts of bagging a koodoo bull.

We had been out perhaps an hour, and by unceasing watchfulness I had learnt many things : they were about as well learnt and as useful as a sentence in a foreign tongue got off by heart ; but to me they seemed the essentials and the fundamentals of hunting. I was feeling very pleased with myself and confident of the result ; the stumbling over stones and stumps had ceased ; and there was no more catching in thorns, crunching on bare gritty places, clinking on rocks, or crackling of dry twigs ; and as we moved on in silence the visions of koodoo and other big game became very real. There was nothing to hinder them : to do as

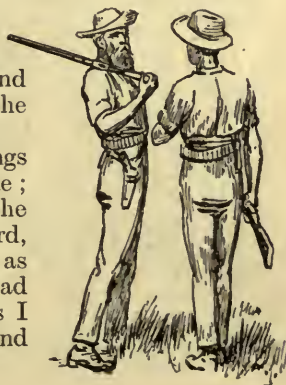
Rocky did had become mechanically easy ; a glance in his direction every now and then was enough ; there was time and temptation to look about and still perhaps to be the first to spot the game.

It was after taking one such casual glance around that I suddenly missed Rocky : a moment later I saw him moving forward, fast but silently, under cover of an ant-heap—stooping low and signing to me with one hand behind his back. With a horrible feeling of having failed him I made a hurried step sideways to get into line behind him and the ant-heap, and I stepped right on to a pile of dry crackly sticks. Rocky stood up quietly and waited, while I wished the earth would open and swallow me. When I got up abreast he half turned and looked me over with eyes slightly narrowed and a faint but ominous smile on one side of his mouth, and drawled out gently :

“ You’d oughter brought some fire crackers ! ” If only he had sworn at me it would have been endurable.

We moved on again and this time I had eyes for nothing but Rocky’s back, and where to put my foot next. It was not very long before he checked in mid-stride and I stood rigid as a pointer. Peering intently over his shoulder in the direction in which he looked I could see nothing. The bush was very open, and yet, even with his raised rifle to guide me, I could not for the life of me see what he was aiming at. Then the shot rang out, and a duiker toppled over kicking in the grass not a hundred yards away.

The remembrance of certain things still makes me feel uncomfortable ; the yell of delight I let out as the buck fell ; the wild dash forward, which died away to a dead stop as I realised that Rocky himself had not moved ; the sight of him, as I looked back, calmly reloading ; and



the silence. To me it was an event : to him, his work. But these things were forgotten then—lost behind the everlasting puzzle, How was it possible I had not seen the buck until it fell ? Rocky must have known what was worrying me, for, after we had picked up the buck, he remarked without any preliminary, "It ain't easy in this bush ter pick up what don't move ; an' it ain't hardly possible ter find what ye don't know !"

"Game, you mean ?" I asked, somewhat puzzled.

"This one was feeding," he answered, after a nod in reply. "I saw his head go up ter listen ; but when they don't move, an' you don't jus' know what they look like, you kin 'most walk atop o' them. You got ter kind o' shape 'em in yer eye, an' when you got that fixed you kin pick 'em up 'most anywhere !"

It cost Rocky an effort to volunteer anything. There were others always ready to talk and advise ; but they were no help. It was Rocky himself who once said that "the man who's allus offerin' his advice fer nothin' 's askin' 'bout 's much 's it's worth." He seemed to run dry of words—like an overdrawn well. For several days he took no further notice of me, apparently having forgotten my existence or repented his good nature. Once, when in reply to a question, I was owning up to the hopes and chances and failures of the day, I caught his attentive look turned on me and was conseious of it—and a little apprehensive—for the rest of the evening ; but nothing happened.

The following evening however it came out. I had felt that that look meant something, and that sooner or later I would catch it. It was characteristic of him that he could always wait, and I never felt quite safe with him—never comfortably sure that something was not being saved up for me for some mistake

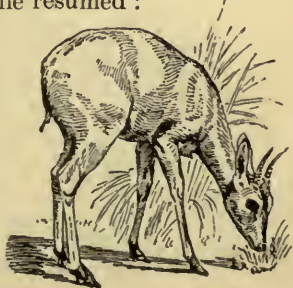


perhaps days old. He was not to be hurried, nor was he to be put off, and nobody ever interrupted him or headed him off. His quiet voice was never raised, and the lazy gentleness never disturbed; he seemed to know exactly what he wanted to say, and to have opening and attention waiting for him. I suppose it was partly because he spoke so seldom: but there was something else too—the something that was just Rocky himself. Although the talk appeared the result of accident, an instinct told me from the start that it was not really so: it was Rocky's slow and considered way.

The only dog with us was licking a cut on her shoulder—the result of an unauthorised rush at a wounded buck—and after an examination of her wound we had wandered over the account of how she had got it, and so on to discussing the dog herself. Rocky sat in silence, smoking and looking into the fire, and the little discussion was closed by some one saying, “She's no good for a hunting dog—too plucky!” It was then I saw Rocky's eyes turned slowly on the last speaker: he looked at him thoughtfully for a good minute, and then remarked quietly:

“Thar ain't no sich thing as too plucky!” And with that he stopped, almost as if inviting contradiction. Whether he wanted a reply or not one cannot say; anyway, he got none. No one took Rocky on unnecessarily; and at his leisure he resumed:

“Thar's brave men; an' thar's fools; an' you kin get some that's both. But thar's a whole heap that ain't! An' it's jus' the same with dawgs. She's no fool, but she ain't been taught: that's what's the matter with her. Men ha' got ter larn: dawgs too! Men

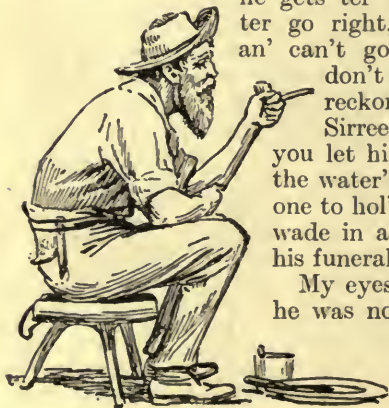


ain't born equal: no more's dawgs! One's born better 'n another—more brains, more heart; but I ain't yet heard o' the man born with knowledge or experience; that's what they got ter learn—men an' dawgs! The born fool's got to do fool's work all the time: but the others larn; and the brave man with brains 's got a big pull. He don't get shook up—jus' keeps on thinkin' out his job right along, while the other feller's worryin' about his hide! An' dawgs is the same.

"Boys is like pups—you got ter help 'em some; but not too much, an' not too soon. They got ter larn themselves. I reckon ef a man's never made a mistake he's never had a good lesson. Ef you don't pay for a thing you don't know what it's worth; and mistakes is part o' the price o' knowledge—the other part is work! But mistakes is the part you don't like payin': that's why you remember it. You save a boy from makin' mistakes, and ef he's got good stuff in him most like you spoil it. He don't know anything properly, 'cause he don't think; and he don't think, 'cause you saved him the trouble an' he never learned how! He don't know the meanin' o' consequences and risks, 'cause you kep' 'em off him! An' bymbye

he gets ter believe it's born in him ter go right, an' knows everything, an' can't go wrong; an' ef things don't pan out in the end he reckon it's jus' bad luck! No! Sirree! Ef he's got ter swim you let him know right there that the water's deep an' thar ain't no one to hol' him up, an' ef he don't wade in an' larn, it's goin' ter be his funeral!"

My eyes were all for Roeky, but he was not looking my way, and when the next remark came, and my heart



jumped and my hands and feet moved of their own accord, his face was turned quite away from me towards the man on his left.

"An' it's jus' the same 'ith huntin'! It looks so blamed easy he reckons it don't need any teachin'. Well, let him try! Leave him on his own till his boots is walked off an' he's like to set down and cry, ef he wasn't 'shamed to; let him know every pur-tickler sort o' blamed fool he can make of himself; an' then he's fit ter teach, 'cause he'll listen, an' watch, an' learn—*an'* say thank ye for it! Mostly you got ter make a fool o' yourself once or twice ter know what it feels like an' how t' avoid it: best do it young—it teaches a boy; but it kind o' breaks a man up!"

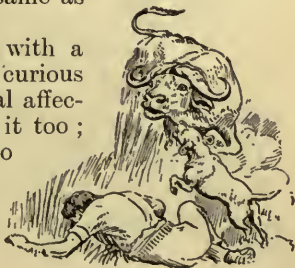
I kept my eyes on Rocky, avoiding the others, fearing that a look or word might tempt some one to rub it in; and it was a relief when the old man naturally and easily picked up his original point and, turning another look on Jess, said:

"You got ter begin on the pup. It ain't her fault; it's yours. She's full up o' the right stuff, but she got no show to larn! Dawgs is all different, good an' bad—just like men: some larns quick; some'll never larn. But thar ain't any too plucky!"

He tossed a chip of green wood into the heart of the fire and watched it spurtle and smoke, and after quite a long pause, added:

"Thar's times when a dawg's got to see it through an' be killed. It's his dooty—same as a man's. I seen it done!"

The last words were added with a narrowing of his eyes and a curious softening of voice—as of personal affection or regret. Others noticed it too; and in reply to a question as to how it had happened Rocky explained in a few words that a wounded buffalo had waylaid

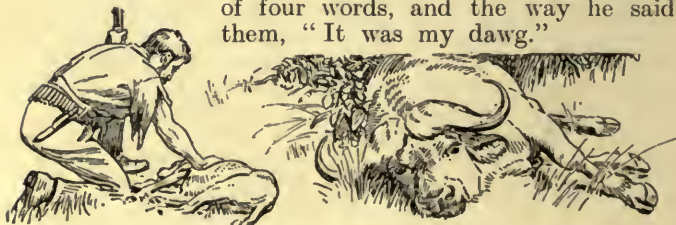


and tossed the man over its back, and as it turned again to gore him the dog rushed in between, fighting it off for a time and eventually fastening on to the nose when the buffalo still pushed on. The cheek enabled the man to reach his gun and shoot the buffalo; but the dog was trampled to death.

"Were you . . . ?" some one began—and then at the look in Rocky's face, hesitated. Rocky, staring into the fire, answered :

"It was my dawg !"

Long after the other men were asleep I lay in my blankets watching the tricks of light and shadow played by the fire, as fitfully it flamed or died away. It showed the long prostrate figures of the others as they slept full stretch on their backs, wrapped in dark blankets; the waggons, touched with unwonted colours by the flames, and softened to ghostly shadows when they died; the oxen, sleeping contentedly at their yokes; Rocky's two donkeys, black and grey, tethered under a thorn-tree—now and then a long ear moving slowly to some distant sound and dropping back again satisfied. I could not sleep; but Rocky was sleeping like a babe. He, gaunt and spare—6 ft. 2 he must have stood—weather-beaten and old, with the long solitary trip before him and sixty odd years of life behind, he slept when he laid his head down, and was wide awake and rested when he raised it. He, who had been through it all, slept; but I, who had only listened, was haunted, bewitched, possessed, by racing thoughts; and all on account of four words, and the way he said them, "It was my dawg."

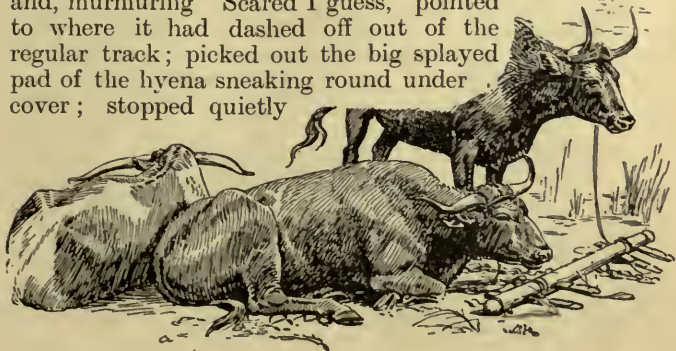


It was still dark, with a faint promise of saffron in the East, when I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard Rocky's voice saying, "Comin' along, Sonny?"

One of the drivers raised his head to look at us as we passed, and then called to his voorlooper to turn the cattle loose to graze, and dropped back to sleep. We left them so and sallied out into the pure clear morning while all the world was still, while the air, cold and subtly stimulating, put a spring into the step and an extra beat or two into the pulse, fairly rinsing lungs and eyes and brain.

What is there to tell of that day? Why! nothing, really nothing, except that it was a happy day—a day of little things that all went well, and so it came to look like the birthday of the hunting. What did it matter to me that we were soaked through in ten minutes? for the dew weighed down the heavy-topped grass with clusters of crystal drops that looked like diamond sprays. It was all too beautiful for words: and so it should be in the spring-time of youth.

Rocky was different that day. He showed me things; reading the open book of nature that I could not understand. He pointed out the spoors going to and from the drinking-place, and named the various animals; showed me one more deeply indented than the rest and, murmuring "Scared I guess," pointed to where it had dashed off out of the regular track; picked out the big splayed pad of the hyena sneaking round under cover; stopped quietly





in his stride to point where a hare was sitting up cleaning itself, not ten yards off; stopped again at the sound of a clear, almost metallic, 'clink,' and pointed to a little sandy gully in front of us down which presently came thirty or forty guinea-fowl in single file, moving swiftly, running and walking, and all in absolute silence except for that one 'clink.' How did he know they were there, and which way they would go, and know it all so promptly? were questions I asked myself.

We walked with the sun—that is, towards the West—so that the light would show up the game and be in their eyes, making it more difficult for them to see us. We watched a little red stembuck get up from his form, shake the dew from his coat, stretch himself, and then pick his way daintily through the wet grass, nibbling here and there as he went. Rocky did not fire; he wanted something better.

After the sun had risen, flooding the whole country with golden light, and, while the dew lasted, making it glisten like a bespangled transformation scene, we came on a patch of old long grass and, parted by some twenty yards, walked through it abreast. There was a wild rush from under my feet, a yellowish body dashed through the grass, and I got out in time to see a rietbuck ram cantering away. Then Rocky, beside me, gave a shrill whistle; the buck stopped, side on, looked back at us, and Rocky dropped it where it stood. Instantly following the shot there was another rush on our left, and before the second rietbuck had gone thirty yards Rocky toppled it over in its tracks. From the whistle to the second shot it was all done in



about ten seconds. To me it looked like magic. I could only gasp.

We cleaned the bucks, and hid them in a bush. There was meat enough for the camp then, and I thought we would return at once for boys to carry it; but Rocky, after a moment's glance round, shouldered his rifle and moved on again. I followed, asking no questions. We had been gone only a few minutes when to my great astonishment he stopped and pointing straight in front asked :

"What 'ud you put up for that stump?"

I looked hard, and answered confidently, "Two hundred!"

"Step it!" was his reply. I paced the distance; it was eighty-two yards.

It was very bewildering; but he helped me out a bit with "Bush telescopes, Sonny!"

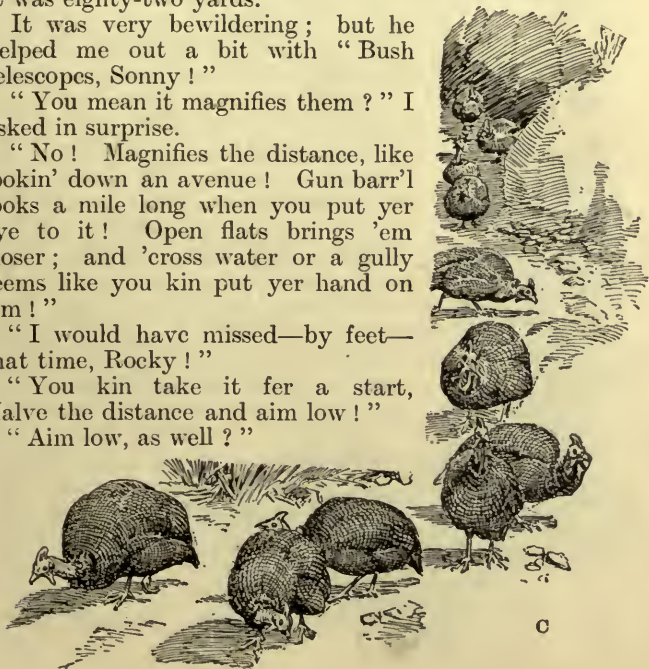
"You mean it magnifies them?" I asked in surprise.

"No! Magnifies the distance, like lookin' down an avenue! Gun barr'l looks a mile long when you put yer eye to it! Open flats brings 'em closer; and 'cross water or a gully seems like you kin put yer hand on 'em!"

"I would have missed—by feet—that time, Rocky!"

"You kin take it fer a start, Halve the distance and aim low!"

"Aim low, as well?"

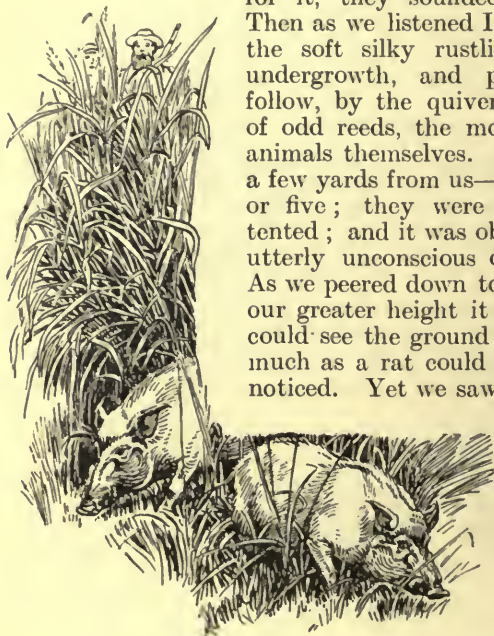


"Thar's allus somethin' low : legs, an' ground to show what you done ! But thar's no 'outers' marked on the sky !"

Once, as we walked along, he paused to look at some freshly overturned ground, and dropped the one word, 'Pig.' We turned then to the right and presently came upon some vlei ground densely covered with tall green reeds. He slowed down as we approached ; I tip-toed in sympathy ; and when only a few yards off he stopped and beckoned me on, and as I came abreast he raised his hand in warning and pointed into the reeds. There was a curious subdued sort of murmur of many deep voices. It conveys no idea of the fact to say they were grunts. They were softened out of all recognition : there is only one word for it, they sounded 'confidential.'

Then as we listened I could make out the soft silky rustling of the rich undergrowth, and presently, could follow, by the quivering and waving of odd reeds, the movements of the animals themselves. They were only a few yards from us—the nearest four or five ; they were busy and contented ; and it was obvious they were utterly unconscious of our presence. As we peered down to the reeds from our greater height it seemed that we could see the ground and that not so much as a rat could have passed unnoticed. Yet we saw nothing !

And then, without the slightest sign, cause or warning that I could detect, in one instant every sound ceased.



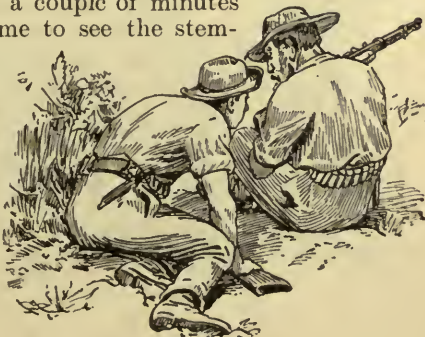
I watched the reeds like a cat on the pounce : never a stir or sign or sound : they had vanished. I turned to Rocky : he was standing at ease, and there was the faintest look of amusement in his eyes.

"They must be there ; they can't have got away ?" It was a sort of indignant protest against his evident 'chucking it' ; but it was full of doubt all the same.

"Try !" he said, and I jumped into the reeds straight away. The under-foliage, it is true, was thicker and deeper than it had looked ; but for all that it was like a conjuring trick—they were not there ! I waded through a hundred yards or more of the narrow belt—it was not more than twenty yards wide anywhere—but the place was deserted. It struck me then that if they could dodge us at five to ten yards while we were watching from the bank and they did not know it—Well, I 'chucked it' too. Rocky was standing in the same place with the same faint look of friendly amusement when I got back, wet and muddy.

"Pigs is like that," he said, "same as elephants—jus' disappears !"

We went on again, and a quarter of an hour later, it may be, Rocky stopped, subsided to a sitting position, beckoned to me, and pointed with his levelled rifle in front. It was a couple of minutes before he could get me to see the stem-buck standing in the shade of a thorn tree. I would never have seen it but for his whisper to look for something moving : that gave it to me ; I saw the movement of the head as it cropped.



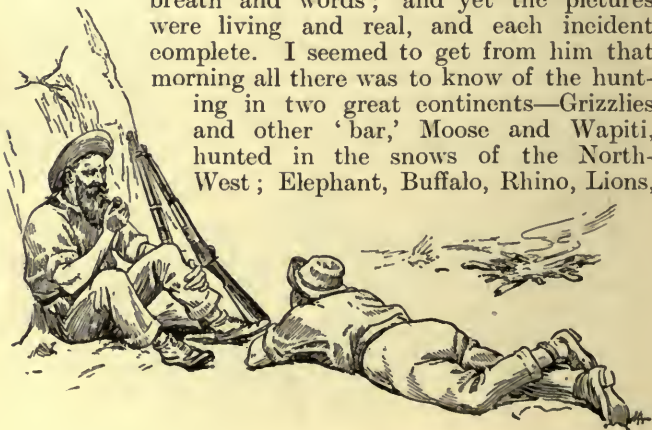
"High: right!" was Rocky's comment, as the bullet ripped the bark off a tree and the startled stem-buck raced away. In the excitement I had forgotten his advice already!

But there was no time to feel sick and disgusted; the buck, puzzled by the report on one side and the smash on the tree on the other, half circled us and stopped to look back. Rocky laid his hand on my shoulder:

"Take your time, Sonny!" he said. "Aim low; an' *don't pull!* *Squeeze!*" And at last I got it.

We had our breakfast there—the liver roasted on the coals, and a couple of 'dough-boys,' with the unexpected addition of a bottle of cold tea, weak and unsweetened, produced from Rocky's knapsack! We stayed there a couple of hours, and that is the only time he really opened out. I understood then—at last—that of his deliberate kindness he had come out that morning meaning to make a happy day of it for a youngster; and he did it.

He had the knack of getting at the heart of things, and putting it all in the fewest words. He spoke in the same slow grave way, with habitual economy of breath and words; and yet the pictures were living and real, and each incident complete. I seemed to get from him that morning all there was to know of the hunting in two great continents—Grizzlies and other 'bar,' Moose and Wapiti, hunted in the snows of the North-West; Elephant, Buffalo, Rhino, Lions,



and scores more, in the sweltering heat of Africa !

That was a happy day !

When I woke up next morning Rocky was fitting the packs on his donkeys. I was a little puzzled, wondering at first if he was testing the saddles, for he had said nothing about moving on ; but when he joined us at breakfast the donkeys stood packed ready to start. Then Robbie asked :

“ Going to make a move, Rocky ? ”

“ Yes ! Reekon I’ll git ! ” he answered quietly.

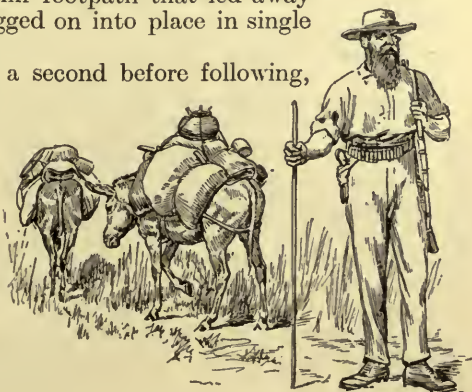
I ate in silence, thinking of what he was to face : many hundreds of miles—perhaps a thousand or two ; many, many months—may be a year or two ; wild country, wild tribes, and wild beasts ; floods and fever ; accident, hunger, and disease ; and alone !

When we had finished breakfast he rinsed out his beaker and hung it on one of the packs, slung his rifle over his shoulder, and picking up his long assegai-wood walking-stick tapped the donkeys lightly to turn them into the Kaffir footpath that led away North. They jogged on into place in single file.

Rocky paused a second before following, turned one brief grave glance on us, and said :

“ Well. So long ! ”

He never came back !





Good dogs were not easy to get ; I had tried hard enough for one before starting, but without success. Even unborn puppies had jealous prospective owners waiting to claim them.

There is always plenty of room at the top of the tree, and good hunting dogs were as rare as good men, good horses, and good front-oxen. A lot of qualities are needed in the make-up of a good hunting dog : size, strength, quickness, scent, sense and speed—and plenty of courage. They are very very difficult to get ; but even small dogs are useful, and many a fine feat stands to the credit of little terriers in guarding camps at night and in standing off wounded animals that meant mischief.

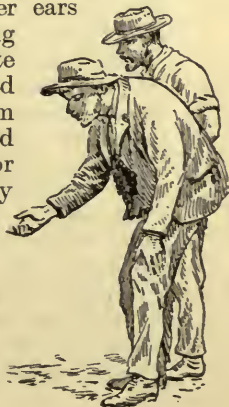
Dennison was saved from a wounded lioness by his two fox terriers. He had gone out to shoot bush-pheasants, and came unexpectedly on a lioness playing with her cubs : the cubs hid in the grass, but she stood up at bay to protect them, and he, forgetting that he had taken the big 'looper' cartridges from his gun and reloaded with No. 6, fired. The shot only maddened her, and she charged ; but the two dogs dashed at her, one at each side, barking, snapping and yelling, rushing in and jumping back so fast and furiously that they flustered her. Leaving the man for the moment, she turned on them, dabbing viciously with her huge paws, first at one, then at the other ; quick as lightning she struck right and left as a kitten will at a twirled string ; but they kept out of reach.

After he had disappeared she ran back to her patch of grass and lay down, but in a few minutes she was back again squatting in the road looking with that same anxious worried expression after her master. Thus she went to and fro for the quarter of an hour it took us to inspan, and each time she passed we could hear a faint anxious little whine.



The oxen were inspanned and the last odd things were being put up when one of the boys came to say that he could not get the guns and water-barrel because Jess would not let him near them. There was something the matter with the dog, he said ; he thought she was mad.

Knowing how Jess hated kaffirs we laughed at the notion, and went for the things ourselves. As we came within five yards of the tree where we had left the guns there was a rustle in the grass, and Jess came out with her swift silent run, appearing as unexpectedly as a snake does, and with some odd suggestion of a snake in her look and attitude. Her head, body and tail were in a dead line, and she was crouching slightly as for a spring ; her ears were laid flat back, her lips twitching constantly, showing the strong white teeth, and her cross wicked eyes had such a look of remorseless cruelty in them that we stopped as if we had been turned to stone. She never moved a muscle or made a sound, but kept those eyes steadily



fixed on us. We moved back a pace or two and began to coax and wheedle her; but it was no good; she never moved or made a sound, and the unblinking look remained. For a minute we stood our ground, and then the hair on her back and shoulders began very slowly to stand up. That was enough: we cleared off. It was a mighty uncanny appearance.

Then another tried his hand; but it was just the same. No one could do anything with her; no one could get near the guns or the water-barrel; as soon as we returned for a fresh attempt she reappeared in the same place and in the same way.

The position was too ridiculous, and we were at our wits' end; for Jess held the camp. The kaffirs declared the dog was mad, and we began to have very uncomfortable suspicions that they were right; but we decided to make a last attempt, and surrounding the place approached from all sides. But the suddenness with which she appeared before we got into position so demoralised the kaffirs that they bolted, and we gave it up, owning ourselves beaten. We turned to watch her as she ran back for the last time, and as she disappeared in the grass we heard distinctly the cry of a very young puppy. Then the secret of Jess's madness was out.

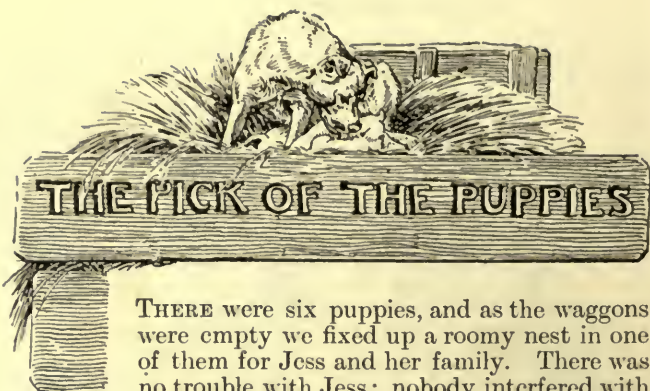
We had to send for Ted, and when he returned a couple of hours later Jess met him out on the road in the dark where she had been watching half the time ever since he left. She jumped up at his chest giving a long tremulous whimper of welcome, and then ran ahead straight to the nest in the grass.

He took a lantern and we followed, but not too close. When he knelt down to look at the puppies she stood over them and pushed herself in between him and them; when he put out a hand to touch them she pushed it away with her nose, whining softly in protest and trembling with excitement—you could see she would not bite, but she hated him to touch

her puppies. Finally, when he picked one up she gave a low cry and caught his wrist gently, but held it.

That was Jess, the mother of Jock!





THERE were six puppies, and as the waggons were empty we fixed up a roomy nest in one of them for Jess and her family. There was no trouble with Jess; nobody interfered with her, and she interfered with nobody. The boys kept clear of her; but we used to take a look at her and the puppies as we walked along with the waggons; so by degrees she got to know that we would not harm them, and she no longer wanted to eat us alive if we went near and talked to her.

Five of the puppies were fat strong yellow little chaps with dark muzzles—just like their father, as Ted said; and their father was an imported dog, and was always spoken of as the best dog of the breed that had ever been in the country. I never saw him, so I do not really know what he was like—perhaps he was not a yellow dog at all; but, whatever he was, he had at that time a great reputation because he was ‘imported,’ and there were not half a dozen imported dogs in the whole of the Transvaal then.



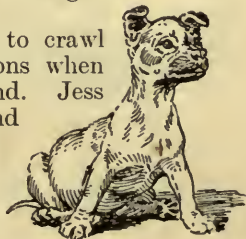
Many people used to ask what breed the puppies were—I suppose it was because poor cross faithful old Jess was not much to look at, and because no one had a very high opinion of yellow dogs in general, and nobody seemed to remember any famous yellow bull-terriers.

Jess looked after her puppies and knew nothing about the remarks that were made, so they did not worry her, but I often looked at the faithful old thing with her dark brindled face, cross-looking eyes and always-moving ears, and thought it jolly hard lines that nobody had a good word for her; it seemed rough on her that every one should be glad there was only one puppy at all like the mother—the sixth one, a poor miserable little rat of a thing about half the size of the others.

He was not yellow like them, nor dark brindled like Jess, but a sort of dirty pale half-and-half colour with some dark faint wavy lines all over him, as if he had tried to be brindled and failed; and he had a dark sharp wizened little muzzle that looked shrivelled up with age.

Most of the fellows said it would be a good thing to drown the odd one because he spoilt the litter and made them look as though they were not really thoroughbred, and because he was such a miserable little rat that he was not worth saving anyhow; but in the end he was allowed to live. I believe no one fancied the job of taking one of Jess's puppies away from her; moreover, as any dog was better than none, I had offered to take him rather than let him be drowned. Ted had old friends to whom he had already promised the pick of the puppies, so when I came along it was too late, and all he could promise me was that if there should be one over I might have it.

As they grew older and were able to crawl about they were taken off the waggons when we outspanned and put on the ground. Jess got to understand this at once, and she used to watch us quite quietly as we took them in our hands to put them down or lift them back again.





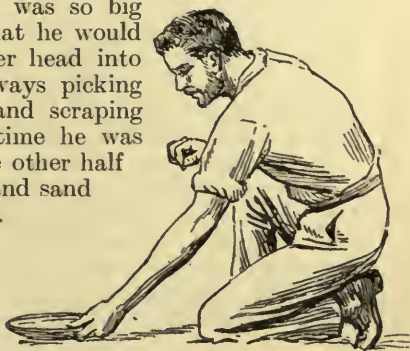
When they were two or three weeks old a man came to the waggons who talked a great deal about dogs, and appeared to know what had to be done. He said that the puppies' tails ought to be docked, and that a bull-terrier would be no class at all with a long tail, but you should on no account clip his ears. I thought he was speaking of fox-terriers, and that with bull-terriers the position was the other way round, at that time; but as he said it was 'the thing' in England, and nobody contradicted him, I shut up. We found out afterwards that he had made a mistake; but it was too late then, and Jess's puppies started life as bull-terriers up to date, with long ears and short tails.

I felt sure from the beginning that all the yellow puppies would be claimed and that I should have to take the odd one, or none at all; so I began to look upon him as mine already, and to take an interest in him and look after him. A long time ago somebody wrote that "the sense of possession turns sand into gold," and it is one of the truest things ever said. Until it seemed that this queer-looking odd puppy was going to be mine I used to think and say very much what the others did—but with this difference, that I always felt sorry for him, and sorry for Jess too, because he was like her and not like the father. I used to think that perhaps if he were given a chance he might grow up like poor old Jess herself, ugly, cross and unpopular, but brave



and faithful. I felt sorry for him, too, because he was small and weak, and the other five big puppies used to push him away from his food and trample on him ; and when they were old enough to play they used to pull him about by his ears and pack on to him—three or four to one—and bully him horribly. Many a time I rescued him, and many a time gave him a little preserved milk and water with bread soaked in it when the others had shouldered him out and eaten everything.

After a little while, when my chance of getting one of the good puppies seemed hopeless and I got used to the idea that I would have to take the odd one, I began to notice little things about him that no one else noticed, and got to be quite fond of the little beggar—in a kind of way. Perhaps I was turning my sand into gold, and my geese into swans ; perhaps I grew fond of him simply because, finding him lonely and with no one else to depend on, I befriended him ; and perhaps it was because he was always cheerful and plucky and it seemed as if there might be some good stuff in him after all. Those were the things I used to think of sometimes when feeding the little outcast. The other puppies would tumble him over and take his food from him ; they would bump into him when he was stooping over the dish of milk and porridge, and his head was so big and his legs so weak that he would tip up and go heels over head into the dish. We were always picking him out of the food and scraping it off him ; half the time he was wet and sticky, and the other half covered with porridge and sand baked hard by the sun.





One day just after the waggons had started, as I took a final look round the outspan place to see if anything had been forgotten, I found the little chap—who was only about four inches high—struggling to walk through the long grass. He was not big enough or strong enough to push his way—even the stems of the down-trodden grass tripped him—and he stumbled and floundered at every step, but he got up again each time with his little tail standing straight up, his head erect, and his ears cocked. He looked such a ridiculous sight that his little tragedy of “lost in the veld” was forgotten—one could only laugh.

What he thought he was doing, goodness only knows; he looked as proud and important as if he owned the whole world and knew that every one in it was watching him. The poor little chap could not see a yard in that grass; and in any case he was not old enough to see much, or understand anything, for his eyes still had that bluish blind look that all very young puppies have, but he was marching along as full of confidence as a general at the head of his army. How he fell out of the waggon no one knew; perhaps the big puppies tumbled him out, or he may have tried to follow Jess, or have climbed over the tail-board to see what was the other side, for he was always going off exploring by himself. His little world was small, it may be—only the bedplank of the waggon and the few square yards of the ground on which they were dumped at the outspans—but he took it as seriously as any explorer who ever tackled a continent.

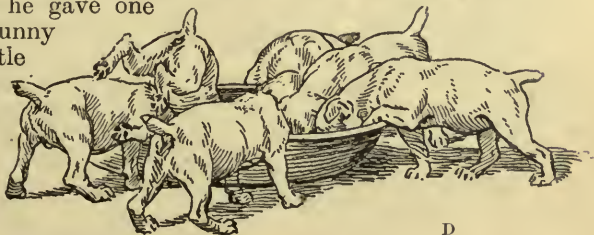
The others were a bit more softened towards the odd puppy when I caught up to the waggons and told them of his valiant struggle to follow; and the man who had docked the puppies’ tails allowed, “I believe the rat’s got pluck, whatever else is the matter with him, for he was the only one that didn’t howl when I snipped them. The little cuss just gave a

grunt and turned round as if he wanted to eat me. I think he'd 'a' been terrible angry if he hadn't been so s'prised. Pity he's such an awful-looking mongrel."

But no one else said a good word for him : he was really beneath notice, and if ever they had to speak about him they called him "The Rat." There is no doubt about it he was extremely ugly, and instead of improving as he grew older, he became worse ; yet, I could not help liking him and looking after him, sometimes feeling sorry for him, sometimes being tremendously amused, and sometimes—wonderful to relate—really admiring him. He was extraordinarily silent ; while the others barked at nothing, howled when lonely, and yelled when frightened or hurt, the odd puppy did none of these things ; in fact, he began to show many of Jess's peculiarities ; he hardly ever barked, and when he did it was not a wild excited string of barks but little suppressed muffled noises, half bark and half growl, and just one or two at a time ; and he did not appear to be afraid of anything, so one could not tell what he would do if he was.

One day we had an amusing instance of his nerve : one of the oxen, sniffing about the outspan, caught sight of him all alone, and filled with curiosity came up to examine him, as a hulking silly old tame ox will do. It moved towards him slowly and heavily with its ears spread wide and its head down, giving great big sniffs at this new object, trying to make out what it was. "The Rat" stood quite still with his stumpy tail cocked up and his head a little on one side, and when the huge ox's nose was about a foot from him he gave one

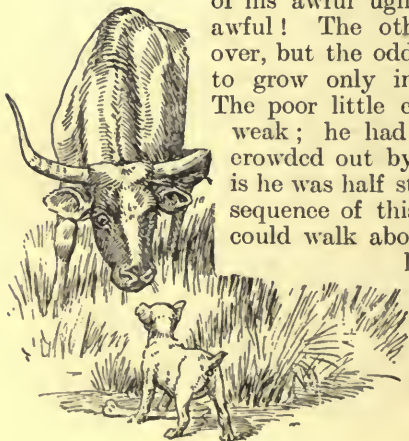
of those funny abrupt little barks. It was as if the object had suddenly



'gone off' like a cracker, and the ox nearly tumbled over with fright; but even when the great mountain of a thing gave a clumsy plunge round and trotted off, "The Rat" was not the least frightened; he was startled, and his tail and ears flickered for a second, but stiffened up again instantly, and with another of those little barks he took a couple of steps forward and cocked his head on the other side. That was his way.

He was not a bit like the other puppies; if any one fired off a gun or cracked one of the big whips the whole five would yell at the top of their voices and, wherever they were, would start running, scrambling and floundering as fast as they could towards the waggon without once looking back to see what they were running away from. The odd puppy would drop his bone with a start or would jump round; his ears and tail would flicker up and down for a second; then he would slowly bristle up all over, and with his head cocked first on one side and then on the other, stare hard with his half-blind bluish puppy eyes in the direction of the noise; but he never ran away.

And so, little by little, I got to like him in spite of his awful ugliness. And it really was awful! The other puppies grew big all over, but the odd one at that time seemed to grow only in one part—his tummy! The poor little chap was born small and weak; he had always been bullied and crowded out by the others, and the truth is he was half starved. The natural consequence of this was that as soon as he could walk about and pick up things for himself he made up for lost time, and filled up his middle piece to an alarming size before the other parts of his body had time to grow; at

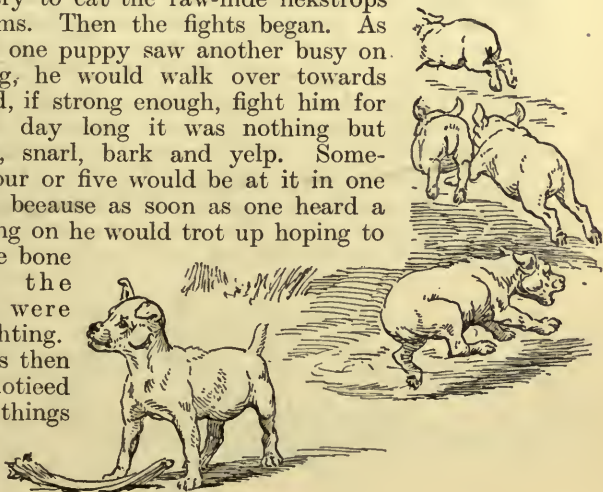


that time he looked more like a big toek-toekie beetle than a dog.

Besides the balloon-like tummy he had stick-out bandy-legs, very like a beetle's too, and a neek so thin that it made the head look enormous, and you wondered how the neek ever held it up. But what made him so supremely ridiculous was that he evidently did not know he was ugly; he walked about as if he was always thinking of his dignity, and he had that puffed-out and stuek-up air of importance that you only see in small people and bantam coeks who are always trying to appear an inch taller than they really are.

When the puppies were about a month old, and could feed on porridge or bread soaked in soup or gravy, they got to be too much for Jess, and she used to leave them for hours at a time and hide in the grass so as to have a little peace and sleep. Puppies are always hungry, so they soon began to hunt about for themselves, and would find seraps of meat and porridge or old bones; and if they could not get anything else, would try to eat the raw-hide nekstrops and reims. Then the fights began. As soon as one puppy saw another busy on anything, he would walk over towards him and, if strong enough, fight him for it. All day long it was nothing but wrangle, snarl, bark and yelp. Sometimes four or five would be at it in one serum; because as soon as one heard a row going on he would trot up hoping to steal the bone while the others were busy fighting.

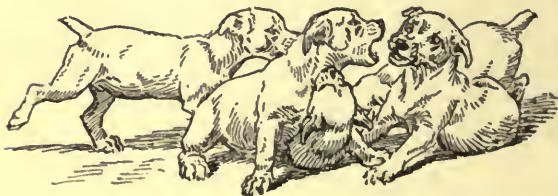
It was then that I noticed other things about



the odd puppy : no matter how many packed on to him, or how they bit or pulled him, he never once let out a yelp ; with four or five on top of him you would see him on his back, snapping right and left with bare white teeth, gripping and worrying them when he got a good hold of anything, and all the time growling and snarling with a fierceness that was really comical. It sounded as a lion fight might sound in a toy phonograph.

Before many days passed, it was clear that some of the other puppies were inclined to leave "The Rat" alone, and that only two of them—the two biggest—seemed anxious to fight him and could take his bones away. The reason soon became apparent : instead of wasting his breath in making a noise, or wasting strength in trying to tumble the others over, "The Rat" simply bit hard and hung on ; noses, ears, lips, cheeks, feet and even tails—all came handy to him ; anything he could get hold of and hang on to was good enough, and the result generally was that in about half a minute the other puppy would leave everything and clear off yelling, and probably holding up one paw or hanging its head on one side to ease a chewed ear.

When either of the big puppies tackled the little fellow the fight lasted much longer. Even if he were tumbled over at once—as generally happened—and the other one stood over him barking and growling, that did not end the fight ; as soon as the other chap got off him he would struggle up and begin again ; he would not give in. The other puppies seemed to think there was some sort of rule like the 'count out'



in boxing, or that once you were tumbled over you ought to give up the

bone ; but the odd puppy apparently did not care about rules ; as far as I could see, he had just one rule : " Stick to it," so it was not very long before even the two big fellows gave up interfering with him. The bites from his little white teeth—sharp as needles—which punctured noses and feet and tore ears, were most unpleasant. But



apart from that, they found there was nothing to be gained by fighting him : they might roll him over time after time, but he came back again and worried them so persistently that it was quite impossible to enjoy the bone—they had to keep on fighting for it.

At first I drew attention to these things, but there was no encouragement from the others ; they merely laughed at the attempt to make the best of a bad job. Sometimes owners of other puppies were nettled by having their beauties compared with " The Rat," or were annoyed because he had the cheek to fight for his own and beat them. Once, when I had described how well he had stood up to Billy's pup, Robbie caught up " The Rat," and placing him on the table, said : " Hats off to the Duke of Wellington on the field of Waterloo." That seemed to me the poorest sort of joke to send five grown men into fits of laughter. He stood there on the table with his head on one side, one ear standing up, and his stumpy tail twiggling—an absurd picture of friendliness, pride and confidence ; yet he was so ugly and ridiculous that my heart sank, and I whisked him away. They made fun of him, and he did not mind ; but it was making fun of me too, and I could not help knowing why ; it was only necessary to put the puppies together to see the reason.

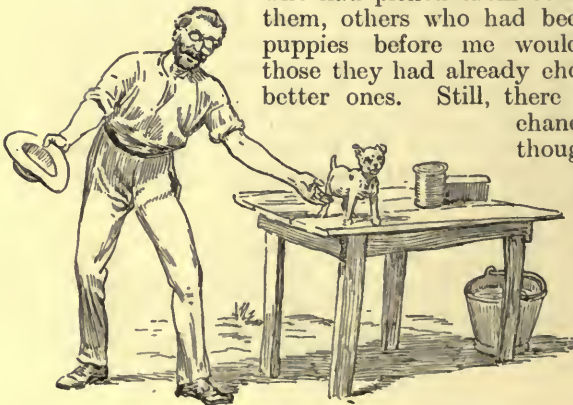
After that I stopped talking



about him, and made the most of the good points he showed, and tried to discover more. It was the only consolation for having to take the leavings of the litter.

Then there came a day when something happened which might easily have turned out very differently, and there would have been no stories and no Jock to tell about; and the best dog in the world would never have been my friend and companion. The puppies had been behaving very badly, and had stolen several nekstrops and chewed up parts of one or two big whips; the drivers were grumbling about all the damage done and the extra work it gave them; and Ted, exasperated by the worry of it all, announced that the puppies were quite old enough to be taken away, and that those who had picked puppies must take them at once and look after them, or let some one else have them. When I heard him say that my heart gave a little thump from excitement, for I knew the day had come when the great question would be settled once and for all. Here was a glorious and unexpected chance; perhaps one of the others would not or could not take his, and I might get one of the good ones. . . . Of course the two big ones would be snapped up: that was certain; for, even if the men who had picked them could not take them, others who had been promised puppies before me would exchange those they had already chosen for the better ones. Still, there were other

chances; and I thought of very little else all day long, wondering if any of the good ones would be left; and if so, which?



In the afternoon Ted came up to where we were all lying in the shade and startled us with the momentous announcement :

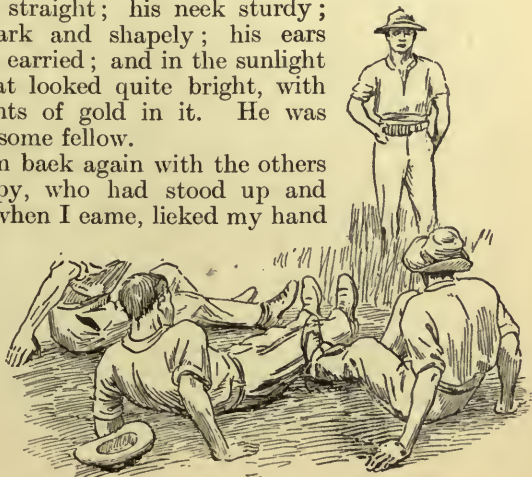
" Billy Griffiths can't take his pup ! "

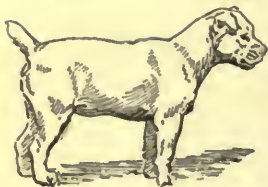
Every man of us sat up. Billy's pup was the first pick, the champion of the litter, the biggest and strongest of the lot. Several of the others said at once that they would exchange theirs for this one ; but Ted smiled and shook his head.

" No," he said, " you had a good pick in the beginning." Then he turned to me, and added : " You've only had leavings." Some one said " The Rat," and there was a shout of laughter, but Ted went on ; " You can have Billy's pup."

It seemed too good to be true ; not even in my wildest imaginings had I fancied myself getting the pick of the lot. I hardly waited to thank Ted before going off to look at my champion. I had seen and admired him times out of number, but it seemed as if he must look different now that he belonged to me. He was a fine big fellow, well built and strong, and looked as if he could beat all the rest put together. His legs were straight ; his neck sturdy ; his muzzle dark and shapely ; his ears equal and well carried ; and in the sunlight his yellow coat looked quite bright, with occasional glints of gold in it. He was indeed a handsome fellow.

As I put him back again with the others the odd puppy, who had stood up and sniffed at me when I came, licked my hand and twiddled his tail with the friendliest and most independent air, as if he knew me quite well





and was glad to see me, and I patted the poor little chap as he waddled up. I had forgotten him in the excitement of getting Billy's pup; but the sight of him made me think of his funny ways, his pluck and independence, and of how he had not a friend in the world except Jess and me; and I felt downright sorry for him. I picked him up and talked to him; and when his wizened little face was close to mine, he opened his mouth as if laughing, and shooting out his red tongue dabbed me right on the tip of my nose in pure friendliness. The poor little fellow looked more ludicrous than ever: he had been feeding again and was as tight as a drum; his skin was so tight one could not help thinking that if he walked over a mimosa thorn and got a scratch on the tummy he would burst like a toy balloon.

I put him back with the other puppies and returned to the tree where Ted and the rest were sitting. As I came up there was a shout of laughter, and—turning round to see what had provoked it—I found “The Rat” at my heels. He had followed me and was trotting and stumbling along, tripping every yard or so, but getting up again with head erect, ears cocked and his stumpy tail twiddling away just as pleased and proud as if he thought he had really started in life and was doing what only a ‘really and truly’ grown-up dog is supposed to do—that is, follow his master wherever he goes.

All the old chaff and jokes were fired off at me again, and I had no peace for quite a time. They all had something to say: “He won’t swap you off!” “I’ll back ‘The Rat’!” “He is going to take care of you!” “He is afraid you’ll get lost!” and so on; and they were still chaffing about it when I grabbed “The Rat” and took him back again.

Billy’s failure to take his puppy was so entirely unexpected and so important that the subject kept

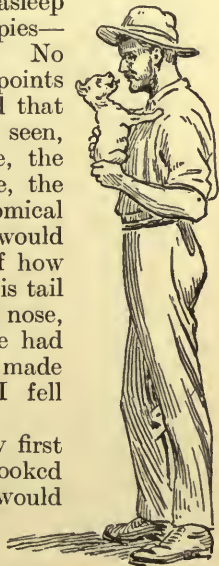


"AND THERE AT MY HEELS WAS THE ODD PUPPY"

cropping up all the evening. It was very amusing then to see how each of those who had wanted to get him succeeded in finding good reasons for thinking that his own puppy was really better than Billy's. However they differed in their estimates of each other's dogs, they all agreed that the best judge in the world could not be certain of picking out the best dog in a good litter until the puppies were several months old; and they all gave instances in which the best looking puppy had turned out the worst dog, and others in which the one that no one would look at had grown up to be the champion. Goodness knows how long this would have gone on if Robbie had not mischievously suggested that "perhaps 'The Rat' was going to beat the whole lot." There was such a chorus of guffaws at this that no one told any more stories.

The poor little friendless Rat! It was unfortunate, but the truth is that he was uglier than before; and yet I could not help liking him. I fell asleep that night thinking of the two puppies—the best and the worst in the litter. No sooner had I gone over all the splendid points in Billy's pup and made up my mind that he was certainly the finest I had ever seen, than the friendly wizened little face, the half-cocked ears and head on one side, the cocky little stump of a tail, and the comical dignified plucky look of the odd puppy would all come back to me. The thought of how he had licked my hand and twiddled his tail at me, and how he dabbed me on the nose, and then the manful way in which he had struggled after me through the grass, all made my heart go soft towards him, and I fell asleep not knowing what to do.

When I woke up in the morning, my first thought was of the odd puppy—how he looked to me as his only friend, and what he would



feel like if, after looking on me as really belonging to him and as the one person that he was going to take care of all his life, he knew he was to be left behind or given away to any one who would take him. It would never have entered his head that he required some one to look after him; from the way he had followed me the night before it was clear he was looking after me; and the other fellows thought the same thing. His whole manner had plainly said: "Never mind, old man! Don't you worry: I am here."

We used to make our first trek at about three o'clock in the morning, so as to be outspanned by sunrise; and walking along during that morning trek I recalled all the stories that the others had told of miserable puppies having grown into wonderful dogs, and of great men who had been very ordinary children; and at breakfast I took the plunge.

"Ted," I said, bracing myself for the laughter, "if you don't mind, I'll stick to 'The Rat.'"

If I had fired off a gun under their noses they would have been much less startled. Robbie made a grab for his plate as it slipped from his knees.

"Don't do that sort of thing!" he protested indignantly. "My nerves won't stand it!"

The others stopped eating and drinking, held their beakers of steaming coffee well out of the way to get a better look at me, and when they saw it was seriously meant there was a chorus of:

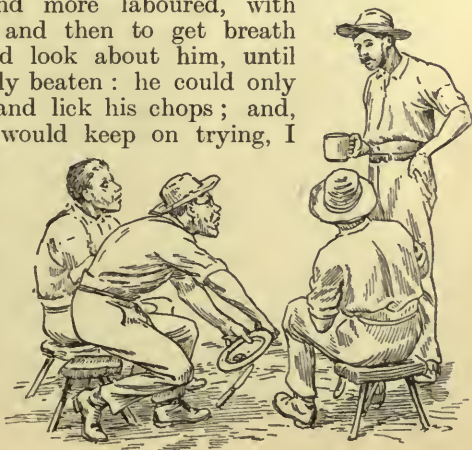
"Well, I'm hanged."

I took him in hand at once—for now he was really mine—and brought him over for his saucer of soaked



bread and milk to where we sat at breakfast. Beside me there was a rough camp table—a luxury sometimes indulged in while camping or trekking with empty waggons—on which we put our tinned-milk, treacle and such things to keep them out of reach of the ants, grasshoppers, Hottentot-gods, beetles and dust. I put the puppy and his saucer in a safe place under the table out of the way of stray feet, and sank the saucer into the sand so that when he trod in it he would not spill the food ; for puppies are quite stupid as they are greedy, and seem to think that they can eat faster by getting further into the dish. He appeared to be more ravenous than usual, and we were all amused by the way the little fellow craned his thin neck out further and further until he tipped up behind and his nose bumping into the saucer saw-sawed him back again. He finished it all and looked round briskly at me, licking his lips and twiddling his stumpy tail.

Well, I meant to make a dog of him, so I gave him another lot. He was just like a little child—he thought he was very hungry still and could eat any amount more ; but it was not possible. The lapping became slower and more laboured, with pauses every now and then to get breath or lick his lips and look about him, until at last he was fairly beaten : he could only look at it, blink and lick his chops ; and, knowing that he would keep on trying, I took the saucer away. He was too full to object or to run after it ; he was too full to move. He stood where he was, with his legs well spread and his little body blown out like a





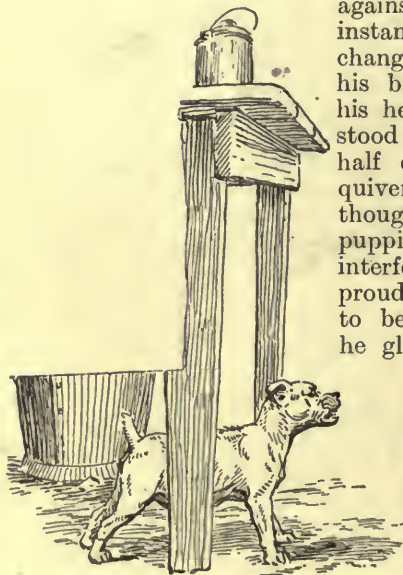
balloon, and finished licking the drops and crumbs off his face without moving a foot.

There was something so extraordinarily funny in the appearance and atti-

tude of the puppy that we watched to see what he would do next. He had been standing very close to the leg of the table, but not quite touching it, when he finished feeding; and even after he had done washing his face and cleaning up generally, he stood there stock still for several minutes, as though it was altogether too much trouble to move. One little bandy hind leg stuck out behind the table-leg, and the bulge of his little tummy stuck out in front of it; so that when at last he decided to make a move the very first little lurch brought his hip up

against the table-leg. In an instant the puppy's appearance changed completely: the hair on his back and shoulders bristled; his head went up erect; one ear stood up straight and the other at half cock; and his stumpy tail quivered with rage. He evidently thought that one of the other puppies had come up behind to interfere with him. He was too proud to turn round and appear to be nervous: with head erect he glared hard straight in front

of him, and, with all the little breath that he had left after his big feed, he growled ferociously in comical little gasps. He stood like that, not moving an inch, with the front foot





"I BELIEVE YOU'VE GOT THE CHAMPION AFTER ALL."

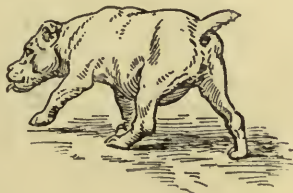
still ready to take that step forward; and then, as nothing more happened, the hair on his back gradually went flat again; the fierceness died out of his face; and the growling stopped.

After a minute's pause, he again very slowly and carefully began to step forward; of course exactly the same thing happened again, except that this time he shook all over with rage, and the growling was fiercer and more choky. One could not imagine anything so small being in so great a rage. He took longer to cool down, too, and much longer before he made the third attempt to start. But the third time it was all over in a second. He seemed to think that this was more than any dog could stand, and that he must put a stop to it. The instant his hip touched the leg, he whipped round with a ferocious snarl—his little white teeth bared and gleaming—and bumped his nose against the table-leg.

I cannot say whether it was because of the shout of laughter from us, or because he really understood what had happened, that he looked so foolish, but he just gave one crestfallen look at me and with a feeble wag of his tail waddled off as fast as he could.

Then Ted nodded over at me, and said: "I believe you have got the champion after all!"

And I was too proud to speak.



JOCK'S SCHOOL DAYS

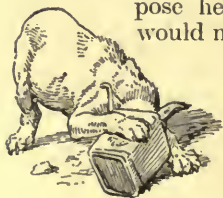
AFTER that day no one spoke of "The Rat" or "The Odd Puppy," or used any of the numberless nicknames that they had given him. They still laughed at his ridiculous dignity; and they loved to tease him to see him stiffen with rage and hear his choky little growls; but they liked his independence and admired his tremendous pluck. So they respected his name when he got one.

And his name was "Jock."

Jock got such a good advertisement by his fight with the table-leg that every one took notice of him now and remarked about what he did; and as he was only a very young puppy, they teased him, fed him, petted him, and did their best to spoil him. He was so young that it did not seem to matter, but I think if he had not been a really good dog at heart he would have been quite spoilt.

The day Jock fought the two big puppies—one after the other—for his bone, and beat them off, was the day of his independence; we all saw the tussle, and cheered the little chap. And then for one whole day he had peace; but it was like the pause at low water before the tide begins to flow the other way. He was so used to being interfered with that I suppose he did not immediately understand they would never tackle him again.

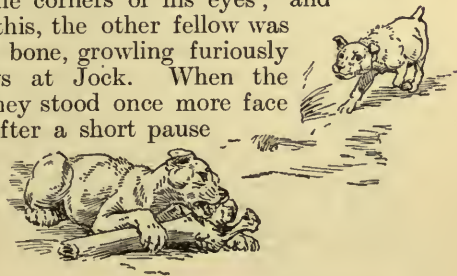
It took a whole day for him to realise this; but as soon as he did understand it he seemed to make up his mind that now his turn had come, and he went for the first puppy he



saw with a bone. He walked up slowly and carefully, and began to make a circle round him. When he got about half-way round the puppy took up the bone and trotted off; but Jock headed him off at once, and again began to walk towards him very slowly and stiffly. The other puppy stood quite still for a moment, and then Jock's fierce determined look was too much for him: he dropped the bone and bolted.

There was mighty little but smell on those bones, for we gave the puppies very little meat, so when Jock had taken what he could off this one, he started on another hunt. A few yards away Billy's pup was having a glorious time, struggling with a big bone and growling all the while as if he wanted to let the world know that it was as much as any one's life was worth to come near him. None of us thought Jock would tackle him, as Billy's pup was still a long way the biggest and strongest of the puppies, and always ready to bully the others.

Jock was about three or four yards away when he caught sight of Billy's pup, and for about a minute he stood still and quietly watched. At first he seemed surprised, and then interested, and then gradually he stiffened up all over in that funny way of his; and when the hair on his shoulders was all on end and his ears and tail were properly up, he moved forward very deliberately. In this fashion he made a circle round Billy's pup, keeping about two feet away from him, walking infinitely slowly and glaring steadily at the enemy out of the corners of his eyes; and while he was doing this, the other fellow was tearing away at his bone, growling furiously and glaring sideways at Jock. When the circle was finished they stood once more face to face; and then after a short pause Jock began to move in closer, but more slowly even than before.





Billy's pup did not like this: it was beginning to look serious. He could not keep on eating and at the same time watch Jock; moreover, there was such a very unpleasant wicked look about Jock, and he moved so steadily and silently forward, that any one would feel a bit creepy and nervous; so he put his paw on the bone and let out a string of snarly barks, with his ears flat on his neck and his tail rather low down. But Jock still came on—a little more carefully and slowly perhaps, but just as steadily as ever. When about a foot off the enemy's nose he changed his direction slightly, as if to walk past, and Billy's pup turned his head to watch him, keeping his nose pointed towards Jock's, but when they got side by side he again looked straight in front of him.

Perhaps he did this to make sure the bone was still there, or perhaps to show his contempt when he thought Jock was going off. Whatever the reason was, it was a mistake; for, as he turned his head away, Jock flew at him, got a good mouthful of ear, and in no time they were rolling and struggling in the dust—Jock's little grunts barely audible in the noise made by the other one. Billy's pup was big and strong, and he was not a coward; but Jock was worrying his ear vigorously, and he could not find anything to bite in return. In less than a minute he began to howl, and was making frantic efforts to get away. Then Jock let go the ear and tackled the bone.

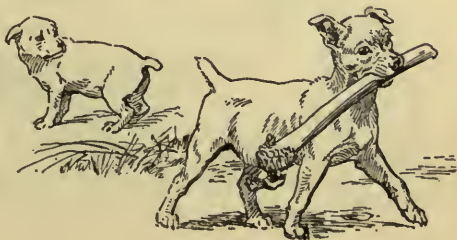
After that he had no more puppy fights. As soon as any one of the others saw Jock begin to walk slowly and carefully towards him he seemed to suddenly get tired of his bone, and moved off.

One by one the other puppies were taken away by their new masters, and before Jock was three months old he and Jess were the only dogs with the waggons. Then he went to school, and like all schoolboys learnt some things very quickly—the things that he liked;

and some things he learnt very slowly, and hated them just as a boy hates extra work in play-time. When I poked about with a stick in the banks of dongas to turn out mice and field-rats for him, or when I hid a partridge or a hare and made him find it, he was as happy as could be ; but when I made him lie down and watch my gun or coat while I pretended to go off and leave him, he did not like it ; and as for his lessons in manners ! well, he simply hated them.

There are some things which a dog in that sort of life simply must learn or you cannot keep him ; and the first of these is, not to steal. Every puppy will help himself until he is taught not to ; and your dog lives with you and can get at everything. At the outspans the grub-box is put on the ground, open for each man to help himself ; if you make a stew, or roast the leg of a buck, the big three-legged pot is put down handy and left there ; if you are lucky enough to have some tinned butter or condensed milk, the tins are opened and stood on the ground ; and if you have a dog thief in the camp, nothing is safe.

I taught Jock not to touch food in camp until he was told to 'take it.' The lesson began when he got his saucer of porridge in the morning ; and he must have thought it cruel to have that put in front of him, and then to be held back or tapped with a finger on the nose each time he tried to dive into it. At first he struggled and fought to get at it ; then he tried to back away and dodge round the other side ; then he became dazed, and, thinking it was not for him at all, wanted to walk off and have nothing more to do with it. In a few days, however, I got him to lie still and take it only when I patted him and

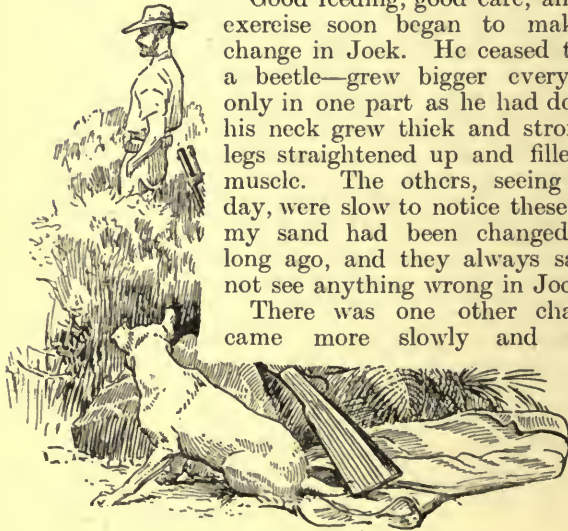


pushed him towards it ; and in a very little time he got on so well that I could put his food down without saying anything and let him wait for permission. He would lie down with his head on his paws and his nose right up against the saucer, so as to lose no time when the order came ; but he would not touch it until he heard 'Take it.' He never moved his head, but his little brown dark eyes, full of childlike eagerness, used to be turned up sideways and fixed on mine. I believe he watched my lips ; he was so quick to obey the order when it came.

When he grew up and had learned his lessons there was no need for these exercises. He got to understand me so well that if I nodded or moved my hand in a way that meant 'all right,' he would go ahead : by that time too he was dignified and patient ; and it was only in his puppyhood that he used to crouch up close to his food and tremble with impatience and excitement.

Good feeding, good care, and plenty of exercise soon began to make a great change in Jock. He ceased to look like a beetle—grew bigger everywhere, not only in one part as he had done at first ; his neck grew thick and strong, and his legs straightened up and filled out with muscle. The others, seeing him every day, were slow to notice these things, but my sand had been changed into gold long ago, and they always said I could not see anything wrong in Jock.

There was one other change which came more slowly and seemed to me much more wonderful. After his morning feed, if

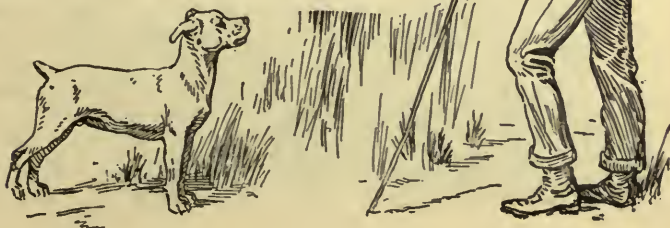


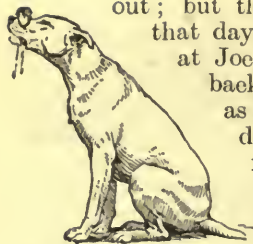
there was nothing to do, he used to go to sleep in some shady place, and I remember well one day watching him as he lay. His



bit of shade had moved away and left him in the bright sunshine; and as he breathed and his ribs rose and fell, the tips of the hairs on his side and back caught the sunlight and shone like polished gold, and the wavy dark lines seemed more distinct and darker, but still very soft. In fact, I was astonished to see that in a certain light Jock looked quite handsome. That was the first time I noticed the change in colour; and it made me remember two things. The first was what the other fellows had said the day Billy gave up his pup, "You can't tell how a puppy will turn out: even his colour changes"; and the second was a remark made by an old hunter who had offered to buy Jock—the real meaning of which I did not understand at the time.

"The best dog I ever owned was a golden brindle," said the old man thoughtfully, after I had laughed at the idea of selling my dog. I had got so used to thinking that he was only a faded wishy-washy edition of Jess that the idea of his colour changing did not occur to me then, and I never suspected that the old man could see how he would turn





out ; but the touch of sunlight opened my eyes that day, and after that whenever I looked at Joek the words "golden brindle" came back to my mind, and him I pictured as he was going to be—and as he really did grow up—having a coat like burnished gold with soft, dark, wavy brindles in it and that snow-white V on his chest.

He learned a good deal from Jess : among other things, that it was not necessary to poke his nose up against a snake in order to find out what it was. He knew that Jess would fight anything ; and when one day he saw her back hair go up and watched her sheer off the footpath wide into the grass, he did the same ; and then when we had shot the snake, both he and Jess came up very very cautiously and sniffed at it, with every hair on their bodies standing up.

He found out for himself that it was not a good idea to turn a scorpion over with his paw. The vicious little tail with a thorn in it whipped over the scorpion's back, and Joek had such a foot that he must have thought a scorpion worse than two waggons. He was a very sick dog for some days ; but after that, whenever he saw a thing that he did not understand, he would watch it very carefully from a little way off and notice what it did and what it looked like, before trying experiments.

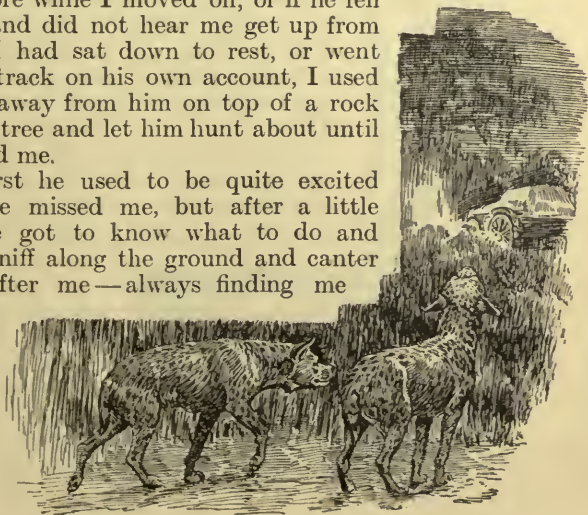
So, little by little, Joek got to understand plenty of things that no town dog would ever know, and he got to know—just as some people do—by what we call instinct, whether a thing was dangerous or safe, even though he had never seen anything like it before. That is how he knew that wolves or lions were about—and that they were danger-



ous—when he heard or scented them; although he had never seen, scented or heard one before to know what sort of animal it might be. You may well wonder how he could tell whether the scent or the cry belonged to a wolf which he must avoid, or to a buck which he might hunt, when he had never seen either a wolf or a buck at the time; but he did know; and he also knew that no dog could safely go outside the ring of the camp fires when wolf or lion was about. I have known many town-bred dogs that could scent them just as well as Jess or Jock could, but having no instinct of danger they went out to see what it was, and of course they never came back.

I used to take Jock with me everywhere so that he could learn everything that a hunting dog ought to know, and above all things to learn that he was my dog, and to understand all that I wanted to tell him. So while he was still a puppy, whenever he stopped to sniff at something new or to look at something strange, I would show him what it was; but if he stayed behind to explore while I moved on, or if he fell asleep and did not hear me get up from where I had sat down to rest, or went off the track on his own account, I used to hide away from him on top of a rock or up a tree and let him hunt about until he found me.

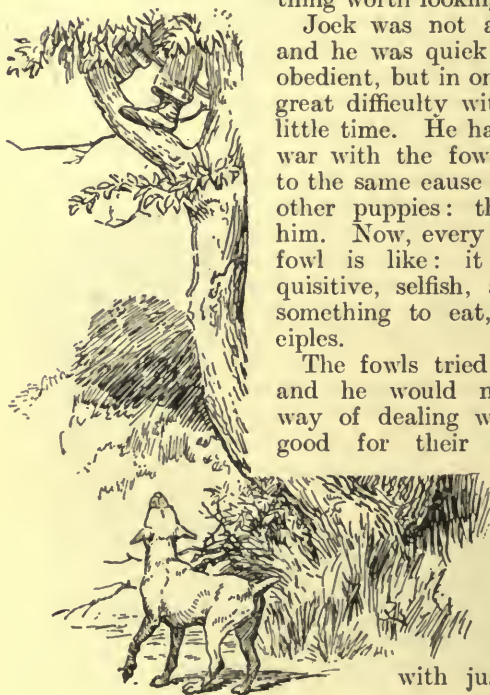
At first he used to be quite excited when he missed me, but after a little time he got to know what to do and would sniff along the ground and canter away after me—always finding me



quite easily. Even if I climbed a tree to hide from him he would follow my track to the foot of the tree, sniff up the trunk as far as he could reach standing up against it, and then peer up into the branches. If he could not see me from one place, he would try another—always with his head tilted a bit on one side. He never barked at these times ; but as soon as he saw me, his ears would drop, his mouth open wide with the red tongue lolling out, and the stump of a tail would twiggle away to show how pleased he was. Sometimes he would give a few little whimpery grunts : he hardly ever barked ; when he did I knew there was something worth looking at.

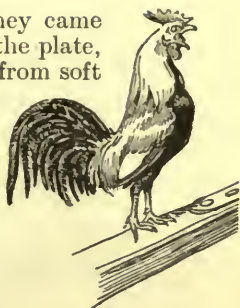
Jock was not a quarrelsome dog, and he was quick to learn and very obedient, but in one connection I had great difficulty with him for quite a little time. He had a sort of private war with the fowls ; and it was due to the same cause as his war with the other puppies : they interfered with him. Now, every one knows what a fowl is like : it is impudent, inquisitive, selfish, always looking for something to eat, and has no principles.

The fowls tried to steal his food ; and he would not stand it. His way of dealing with them was not good for their health : before I could teach him not to kill, and before the fowls would learn not to steal, he had finished half a dozen of them one after another with just one bite and a



shake. He would growl very low as they came up and, without lifting his head from the plate, watch them with his little eyes turning from soft brown to shiny black; and when they came too near and tried to snatch just one mouthful—well, one jump, one shake, and it was all over.

In the end he learned to tumble them over and scare their wits out without hurting them; and they learned to give him a very wide berth.



THE FIRST HUNT



JOCK's first experience in hunting was on the Crocodile River, not far from the spot where long afterwards we had the great fight with The Old Crocodile. In the summer when the heavy rains flood the country the river runs 'bank high,' hiding everything—reeds, rocks, islands, and stunted trees—in some places silent and oily like a huge gorged snake, in others foaming and turbulent as an angry monster. In the rainless winter when the water is low and clear the scene is not so grand, but is quiet, peaceful and much more beautiful. There is an infinite variety in it then—the river sometimes winding along in one deep channel, but more often forking out into two or three streams in the broad bed. The loops and lacings of the divided water carve out islands and spaces of all shapes and sizes, banks of clean white sand or of firm damp mud swirled up by the floods, on which tall green reeds with yellow tasselled tops shoot up like crops of Kaffir corn. Looked down upon from the flood banks the silver streaks of water gleam brightly in the sun, and the graceful reeds, bowing and swaying slowly with the gentlest breeze and alternately showing their leaf sheathed stems and crested tops, give the appearance of an ever-changing sea of green and gold. Here and

there a big rock, black and polished, stands boldly out, and the sea of reeds laps round it like the waters of a lake on a bright still day. When there is no breeze the rustle of the reeds is hushed, and the only constant sound is the ever-varying voice of the water, lapping, gurgling, chattering, murmuring, as it works its way along the rocky channels; sometimes near and loud, sometimes faint and distant; and sometimes, over long sandy reaches, there is no sound at all.



There is always good shooting along the rivers in a country where water is scarce. Partridges, bush-pheasants and stembuck were plentiful along the banks and among the thorns, but the reeds themselves were the home of thousands of guinea-fowl, and you could also count on duiker and rietbuck as almost a certainty there. If this were all, it would be like shooting in a well-stocked cover, but it is not only man that is on the watch for game at the drinking-places. The beasts of prey—lions, tigers, hyenas, wild dogs and jackals, and lastly pythons and crocodiles—know that the game must come to water, and they lie in wait near the tracks or the drinking-places. That is what makes the mystery and charm of the reeds; you never know what you will put up. The lions and tigers had deserted the country near the main drifts and followed the big game into more peaceful parts; but the reeds were still the favourite shelter and resting-place of the crocodiles; and there were any number of them left.

There is nothing that one comes across in hunting more horrible and loathsome than the crocodile: nothing that rouses the feeling of horror and hatred as it does: nothing that so surely and quickly gives the sensation of 'creeps in the back' as the noiseless apparition of one in the water just where you least



expected anything, or the discovery of one silently and intently watching you with its head resting flat on a sand-spit—the thing you had seen half a dozen times before and mistaken for a small rock. Many things are hunted in the Bushveld; but only the crocodile is hated. There is always the feeling of horror that this hideous, cowardly, cruel thing—the enemy of man and beast alike—with its look of a cunning smile in the greeny glassy eyes and great wide mouth, will mercilessly drag you down—down—down to the bottom of some deep still pool, and hold you there till you drown. Utterly helpless yourself to escape or fight, you cannot even call, and if you could, no one could help you there.

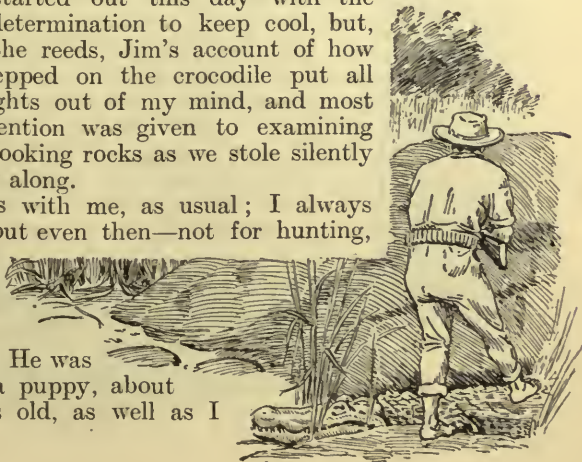
It is all done in silence: a few bubbles come up where a man went down; and that is the end of it.

We all knew about the crocodiles and were prepared for them, but the sport was good, and when you are fresh at the game and get interested in a hunt it is not very easy to remember all the things you have been warned about and the precautions you were told to take. It was on the first day at the river that one of our party, who was not a very old hand at hunting, came in wet and muddy and told us how a crocodile had seared the wits out of him. He had gone out after guinea-fowl, he said, but as he had no dog to send in and flush them, the birds simply played with him: they would not rise but kept running in the reeds a little way in front of him, just out of sight. He could hear them quite distinctly, and thinking to steal a march on them took off his boots and got on to the rocks. Stepping bare-footed from rock to rock where the reeds were thin, he made

no noise at all and got so close up that he could hear the little whispered chink-chink-chink that they give when near danger. The only chance of getting a shot at them was to mount one of the big rocks from which he could see down into the reeds; and he worked his way along a mud-bank towards one. A couple more steps from the mud-bank on to a low black rock would take him to the big one. Without taking his eyes off the reeds where the guinea-fowl were he stepped cautiously on to the low black rock, and in an instant was swept off his feet, tossed and tumbled over and over, into the mud and reeds, and there was a noise of furious rushing and crashing as if a troop of elephants were stampeding through the reeds. He had stepped on the back of a sleeping crocodile; no doubt it was every bit as frightened as he was. There was much laughter over this and the breathless earnestness with which he told the story; but there was also a good deal of chaff, for it seems to be generally accepted that you are not bound to believe all hunting stories; and Jim and his circus crocodile became the joke of the camp.

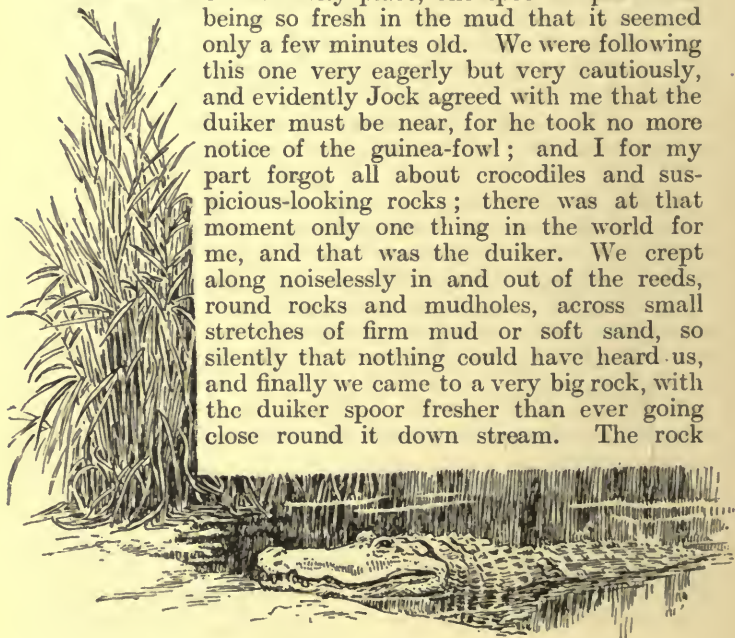
I had started out this day with the same old determination to keep cool, but, once into the reeds, Jim's account of how he had stepped on the crocodile put all other thoughts out of my mind, and most of my attention was given to examining suspicious-looking rocks as we stole silently and quietly along.

Jock was with me, as usual; I always took him out even then—not for hunting, because he was too young, but in order to train him. He was still only a puppy, about six months old, as well as I



remember and had never tackled or even followed a wounded buck, so that it was impossible to say what he would do; he had seen me shoot a couple and had wanted to worry them as they fell; but that was all. He was quite obedient and kept his place behind me; and, although he trembled with excitement when he saw or heard anything, he never rushed in or moved ahead of me without permission. The guinea-fowl tormented him that day; he could scent and hear them, and was constantly making little runs forward, half crouching and with his nose back and tail dead level and his one ear full-cocked and the other half-up.

For about half an hour we went on in this way. There was plenty of fresh duiker spoor to show us that we were in a likely place, one spoor in particular being so fresh in the mud that it seemed only a few minutes old. We were following this one very eagerly but very cautiously, and evidently Jock agreed with me that the duiker must be near, for he took no more notice of the guinea-fowl; and I for my part forgot all about crocodiles and suspicious-looking rocks; there was at that moment only one thing in the world for me, and that was the duiker. We crept along noiselessly in and out of the reeds, round rocks and mudholes, across small stretches of firm mud or soft sand, so silently that nothing could have heard us, and finally we came to a very big rock, with the duiker spoor fresher than ever going close round it down stream. The rock

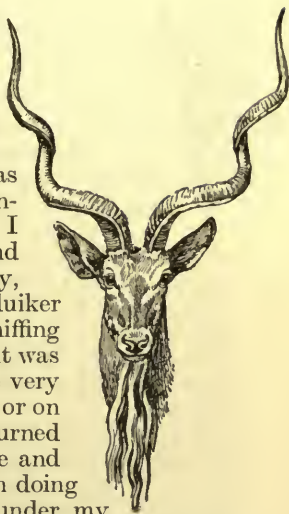


was a long sloping one, polished smooth by the floods and very slippery to walk on. I climbed it in dead silence, peering down into the reeds and expecting every moment to see the duiker.

The slope up which we erept was long and easy, but that on the downstream side was much steeper. I crawled up to the top on hands and knees, and raising myself slowly, looked carefully about, but no duiker could be seen; yet Joek was sniffing and trembling more than ever, and it was quite clear that he thought we were very close up. Seeing nothing in front or on either side, I stood right up and turned to look back the way we had come and examine the reeds on that side. In doing so a few grains of grit crunched under my foot, and instantly there was a rush in the reeds behind me; I jumped round to face it, believing that the crocodile was grabbing at me from behind, and on the polished surface of the rock my feet slipped and shot from under me, both bare elbows bumped hard on the rock, jerking the rifle out of my hands; and I was launched like a torpedo right into the mass of swaying reeds.

When you think you are tumbling on to a crocodile there is only one thing you want to do—get out as soon as possible. How long it took to reach the top of the rock again, goodness only knows! It seemed like a life-time; but the fact is I was out of those reeds and up that rock in time to see the duiker as it broke out of the reeds, raced up the bank, and disappeared into the bush with Jock tearing after it as hard as ever he could go.

One call stopped him, and he came back to me looking very crestfallen and guilty, no doubt thinking





that he had behaved badly and disgraced himself. But he was not to blame at all ; he had known all along that the duiker was there—having had no distracting fancies about crocodiles—and when he saw it dash off and his master instantly jump in after it, he must have thought that the hunt had at last begun and that he was expected to help.

After all that row and excitement there was not much use in trying for anything more in the reeds—and indeed I had had quite enough of them for one afternoon ; so we wandered along the upper banks in the hope of finding something where there were no crocodiles, and it was not long before we were interested in something else and able to forget all about the duiker.

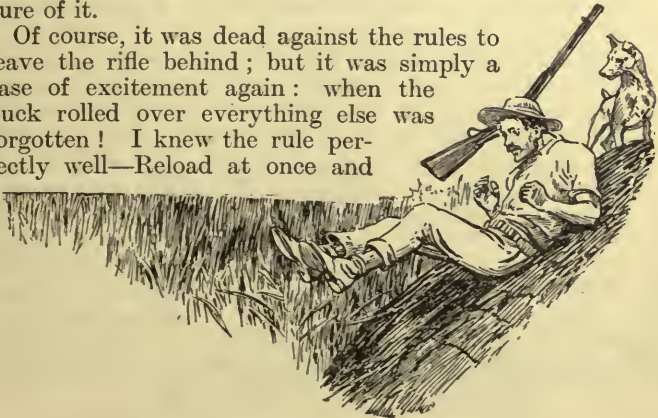
Before we had been walking many minutes, Jock raised his head and ears and then lowered himself into a half-crouching attitude and made a little run forward. I looked promptly in the direction he was pointing, and about two hundred yards away saw a stembuck standing in the shade of a mimosa bush feeding briskly on the buffalo grass. It was so small and in such bad light that the shot was too difficult for me at that distance, and I crawled along behind bushes, ant-heaps and trees until we were close enough for anything. The ground was soft and sandy, and we could get along easily enough without making any noise ; but all the time, whilst thinking how lucky it was to be on ground so soft for the hands and knees, and so easy to move on without being heard, something else was happening. With eyes fixed on the buck I did not notice that, in crawling along on all-fours, the muzzle of the rifle dipped regularly into the sand, picking up a little in the barrel each time. There was not enough to burst the rifle, but the effect was surprising. Following on a painfully careful aim, there was a deafening report that made my head reel and buzz ; the kick of the rifle on the shoulder and

cheek left me blue for days ; and when my eyes were clear enough to see anything the stembuck had disappeared.

I was too disgusted to move, and sat in the sand rubbing my shoulder and thanking my stars that the rifle had not burst. There was plenty to think about, to be sure, and no hurry to do anything else, for the noise of the shot must have startled every living thing for a mile round.

It is not always easy to tell the direction from which a report comes when you are near a river or in broken country or patchy bush ; and it is not an uncommon thing to find that a shot which has frightened one animal away from you has startled another and driven it towards you ; and that is what happened in this case. As I sat in the shade of the thorns with the loaded rifle across my knees there was the faint sound of a buck cantering along in the sand ; I looked up ; and only about twenty yards from me a duiker came to a stop, half fronting me. There it stood looking back over its shoulder and listening intently, evidently thinking that the danger lay behind it. It was hardly possible to miss that ; and as the duiker rolled over, I dropped my rifle and ran to make sure of it.

Of course, it was dead against the rules to leave the rifle behind ; but it was simply a case of excitement again : when the buck rolled over everything else was forgotten ! I knew the rule perfectly well—Reload at once and



never part with your gun. It was one of Rocky's lessons, and only a few weeks before this, when out for an afternoon's shooting with an old hunter, the lesson had been repeated. The old man shot a rietbuck ram, and as it had been facing us and dropped without a kick we both thought that it was shot through the brain. There was no mark on the head, however, and although we examined it carefully, we failed to find the bullet-mark or a trace of blood ; so we put our rifles down to settle the question by skinning the buck. After sawing at the neck for half a minute, however, the old man found his knife too blunt to make an opening, and we both hunted about for a stone to sharpen it on, and while we were fossieking about in the grass there was a noise behind, and looking sharply round we saw the buck scramble to its feet and scamper off before we had time to move. The bullet must have touched one of its horns and stunned it. My companion was too old a hunter to get excited, and while I ran for the rifles and wanted to chase the buck on foot he stood quite still, gently rubbing the knife on the stone he had picked up. Looking at me under bushy eyebrows and smiling philosophically, he said :

"That's something for you to remember, Boy. It's my belief if you lived for ever there'd always be something to learn at this game."

Unfortunately I did not remember when it would have been useful. As I ran forward the duiker tumbled, struggled and rolled over and over, then got up and made a dash, only to dive head foremost into the sand and somersault over ; but in a second it was up again and racing off, again to trip and plunge forward on to its chest with its nose out-

stretched sliding along the soft ground. The bullet had struck it in the shoulder, and the



broken leg was tripping it and bringing it down ; but, in far less time than it takes to tell it, the little fellow found out what was wrong, and scrambling once more to its feet was off on three legs at a pace that left me far behind. Jock, remembering the mistake in the reeds, kept his place behind, and I in the excitement of the moment neither saw nor thought of him until the duiker, gaining at every jump, looked like vanishing for ever. Then I remembered and, with a frantic wave of my hand, shouted, "After him, Jock."

He was gone before my hand was down, and faster than I had ever seen him move, leaving me ploughing through the heavy sand far behind. Past the big bush I saw them again, and there the duiker did as wounded game so often do : taking advantage of cover it changed direction and turned away for some dense thorns. But that suited Jock exactly ; he took the short cut across to head it off and was close up in a few more strides. He caught up to it, raced up beside it, and made a jump at its throat ; but the duiker darted away in a fresh direction, leaving him yards behind. Again he was after it and tried the other side ; but the buck was too quick, and again he missed and overshot the mark in his jump. He was in such deadly earnest he seemed to turn in the air to get back again and once more was close up—so close that the flying heels of the buck seemed to pass each side of his ears ; then he made his spring from behind, catching the duiker high up on one hind leg, and the two rolled overtogether, kicking and struggling in a cloud of dust. Time after time the





duiker got on its feet, trying to get at him with its horns or to break away again; but Joek, although swung off his feet and rolled on, did not let go his grip. In grim silence he hung on while the duiker plunged, and, when it fell, tugged and worried as if to shake the life out of it.

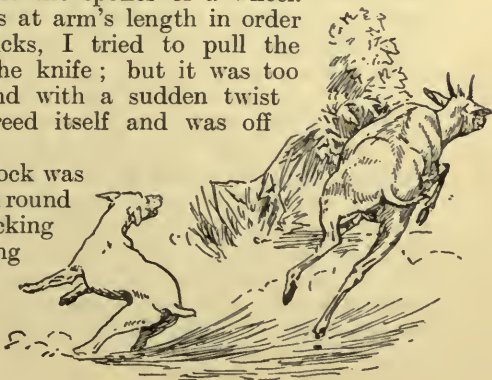
What with the hot sun, the heavy sand, and the pace at which we had gone, I was so pumped that I finished the last hundred yards at a walk, and had plenty of time to see what was going on; but even when I got up to them the struggle was so fierce and the movements so quick that for some time it was not possible to get hold of the duiker to finish it off. At last came one particularly bad fall, when the buck rolled over on its back, and then Joek let go his grip and made a dash for its throat; but again the duiker was too quick for him; with one twist it was up and round facing him on its one knee, and dug, thrust, and swept with its black spiky horns so vigorously that it was impossible to get at its neck. As Joek rushed in the head ducked and the horns flashed round so swiftly that it seemed as if nothing could save him from being stabbed through and through, but his quickness and cleverness were a revelation to me. If he could not catch the duiker, it could not catch him: they were in a way too quick for each other, and they were a long way too quick for me.

Time after time I tried to get in close enough to grab one of the buck's hind legs, but it was not to be caught. While Joek was at it fast and furious in front, I tried to creep up quietly behind—but it was no use: the duiker kept facing Joek with horns down, and whenever I moved it swung round and kept me in front also. Finally I tried a run straight in; and then it made another dash for liberty. On three legs,

however, it had no chance, and in another minute Jock had it again, and down they came together, rolling over and over once more. The duiker struggled hard, but he hung on, and each time it got its feet to the ground to rise he would tug sideways and roll it over again, until I got up to them, and catching the buck by the head, held it down with my knee on its neck and my Bushman's Friend in hand to finish it.

There was, however, still another lesson for us both to learn that day; neither of us knew what a buck can do with its hind feet when it is down. The duiker was flat on its side; Jock, thinking the fight was over, had let go; and, before I could move, the supple body doubled up, and the feet whizzed viciously at me right over its head. The little pointed cloven feet are as hard and sharp as horns and will tear the flesh like claws. By good luck the kick only grazed my arm, but although the touch was the lightest it cut the skin and little beads of blood shot up marking the line like the scratch of a thorn. Missing my arm the hoof struck full on the handle of the Bushman's Friend and sent it flying yards out of reach. And it was not merely one kick: faster than the eye could follow them the little feet whizzed and the legs seemed to buzz round like the spokes of a wheel. Holding the horns at arm's length in order to dodge the kicks, I tried to pull the duiker towards the knife; but it was too much for me, and with a sudden twist and a wrench freed itself and was off again.

All the time Jock was moving round and round panting and licking his chops, stepping in and stepping back, giving anxious little



whimpers, and longing to be at it again, but not daring to join in without permission. When the duiker broke away, however, he waited for nothing, and was on to it in one spring—again from behind; and this time he let go as it fell, and jumping free of it, had it by the throat before it could rise. I ran to them again, but the picking up of the knife had delayed me and I was not in time to save Jock the same lesson that the duiker had just taught me.

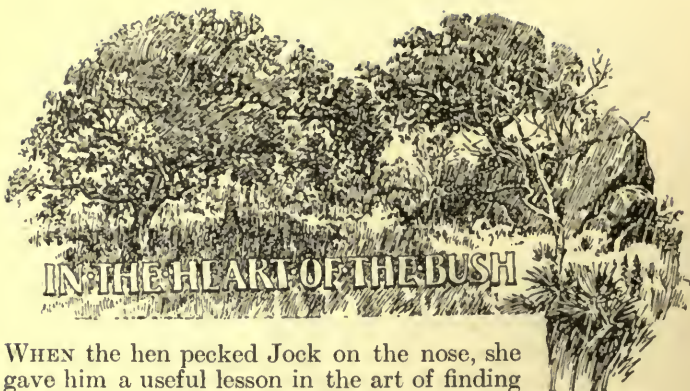
Down on its side, with Jock's jaws locked in its throat, once more the duiker doubled up and used its feet. The first kick went over his head and scraped harmlessly along his back; but the second caught him at the point of the shoulder, and the razor-like toe ripped his side right to the hip. Then the dog showed his pluck and cleverness. His side was cut open as if it had been slashed by a knife, but he never flinched or loosened his grip for a second; he seemed to go at it more furiously than ever, but more cleverly and warily. He swung his body round clear of the whizzing feet, watching them with his little beady eyes fixed sideways and the gleaming whites showing in the corners; he tugged away incessantly and vigorously, keeping the buck's neck stretched out and pulling it round in a circle backwards so that it could not possibly double its body up enough to kick him again; and before I could catch the feet to help him, the kicks grew weaker; the buck slackened out, and Jock had won.

The sun was hot, the sand was deep, and the rifle was hard to find; it was a long way back to the waggons, and the duiker made a heavy load; but the end of that first chase seemed so good that nothing else mattered. The only thing I did mind was the open cut on Jock's side; but he minded nothing: his tail was going like a telegraph needle; he was panting with his mouth open from ear to ear, and his red tongue hanging out and making great slapping

licks at his chops from time to time ; he was not still for a second, but kept walking in and stepping back in a circle round the duiker, and looking up at me and then down at it, as if he was not at all sure that there might not be some fresh game on, and was consulting me as to whether it would not be a good thing to have another go in and make it all safe.

He was just as happy as a dog could be, and perhaps he was proud of the wound that left a straight line from his shoulder to his hip and showed up like a cord under the golden brindle as long as he lived—a memento of his first real hunt.





WHEN the hen pecked Jock on the nose, she gave him a useful lesson in the art of finding out what you want to know without getting into trouble. As he got older, he also learned that there are only certain things which concerned him and which it was necessary for him to know. A young dog begins by thinking that he can do everything, go everywhere, and know everything; and a hunting dog has to learn to mind his own business, as well as to understand it. Some dogs turn sulky or timid or stupid when they are checked, but an intelligent dog with a stout heart will learn little by little to leave other things alone, and grow steadily keener on his own work. There was no mistake about Jock's keenness. When I took down the rifle from the waggon he did not go off into ecstasies of barking, as most sporting dogs will do, but would give a quick look up and with an eager little run towards me give a whimper of joy, make two or three bounds as if wanting to stretch his muscles and loosen his joints, then shake himself vigorously as though he had just come out of the water, and with a soft suppressed "Woo-woo-woo" full of contentment, drop silently into his place at my heels and give his whole attention to his work.

He was the best of companions, and through the years that we hunted together I never tired of watching him. There was always something to learn, some-

thing to admire, something to be grateful for, and very often something to laugh at—in the way in which we laugh only at those whom we are fond of. It was the struggle between Jock's intense keenness and his sense of duty that most often raised the laugh. He knew that his place was behind me; but probably he also knew that nine times out of ten he scented or saw the game long before I knew there was anything near, and naturally wanted to be in front or at least abreast of me to show me whatever there was to be seen.

He noticed, just as surely and as quickly as any human being could, any change in my manner: nothing escaped him, for his eyes and ears were on the move the whole time. It was impossible for me to look for more than a few seconds in any one direction, or to stop or even to turn my head to listen, without being caught by him. His bright brown eyes were everlastingly on the watch and on the move: from me to the bush, from the bush back to me. When we were after game, and he could scent or see it, he would keep a foot or two to the side of me so as to have a clear view; and when he knew by my manner that I thought there was game near, he kept so close up that he would often bump against my heels as I walked, or run right into my legs if I stopped suddenly. Often when stalking buck very quietly and cautiously, thinking only of what was in front, I would get quite a start by feeling something bump up against me behind. At these times it was impossible to say anything without risk of scaring the game, and I got into the habit of making signs with my hand which he understood quite as well.

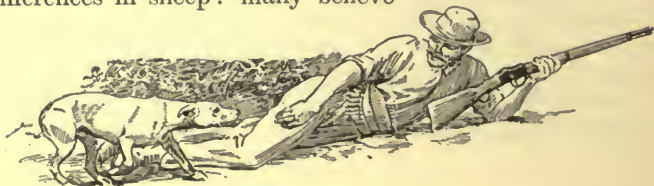
Sometimes after having crawled up I would be in the act of aiming when he would press up against me. Nothing puts one off so much as a touch or the expectation of being jogged when in the act of firing, and I used to get angry with him then, but dared not breathe a word; I would lower my head slowly,

turn round, and give him a look. He knew quite well what it meant. Down would go his ears instantly, and he would back away from me a couple of steps, drop his stump of a tail and wag it in a feeble deprecating way, and open his mouth into a sort of foolish laugh. That was his apology! "I beg your pardon: it was an accident! I won't do it again."

It was quite impossible to be angry with him, he was so keen and he meant so well; and when he saw me laughing softly at him, he would come up again close to me, cock his tail a few inches higher and wag it a bit faster.

There is a deal of expression in a dog's tail: it will generally tell you what his feelings are; and that is certainly how I knew what Jock was thinking about once when lost in the veld; and it showed me the way back.

It is easy enough to lose oneself in the Bushveld. The Berg stands up some thousands of feet inland on the west, looking as if it had been put there to hold up the Highveld; and between the foothills and the sea lies the Bushveld, stretching for hundreds of miles north and south. From the height and distance of the Berg it looks as flat as the floor, but in many parts it is very much cut up by deep rough dongas, sharp rises and depressions, and numbers of small kopjes. Still, it has a way of looking flat, because the hills are small, and very much alike; and because hill and hollow are covered and hidden mile after mile by small trees of a wonderful sameness, just near enough together to prevent you from seeing more than a few hundred yards at a time. Most people see no differences in sheep: many believe

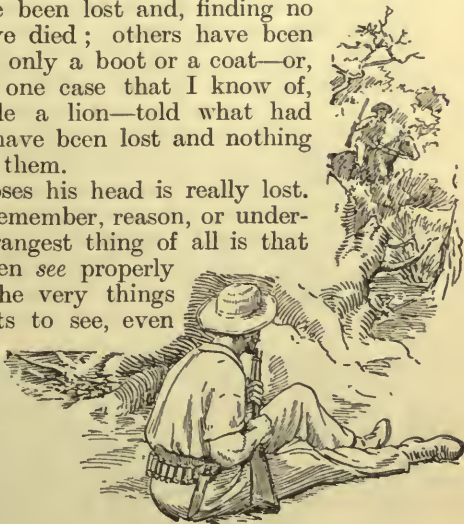


that all Chinamen are exactly alike; and so it is with the Bushveld: you have to know it first.

So far I had never lost my way out hunting. The experiences of other men and the warnings from the old hands had made me very careful. We were always hearing of men being lost through leaving the road and following up the game while they were excited, without noticing which way they went and how long they had been going. There were no beaten tracks and very few landmarks, so that even experienced hunters went astray sometimes for a few hours or a day or two when the mists or heavy rains came on and nothing could be seen beyond fifty or a hundred yards.

Nearly every one who goes hunting in the Bushveld gets lost some time or other—generally in the beginning before he has learned to notice things. Some have been lost for many days until they blundered on to a track by accident or were found by a search-party; others have been lost and, finding no water or food, have died; others have been killed by lions, and only a boot or a coat—or, as it happened in one case that I know of, a ring found inside a lion—told what had occurred; others have been lost and nothing more ever heard of them.

The man who loses his head is really lost. He cannot think, remember, reason, or understand; and the strangest thing of all is that he often cannot even *see* properly—he fails to see the very things that he most wants to see, even when they are as large as life before him. Crossing the road without seeing it is not the only or the most extraordinary example

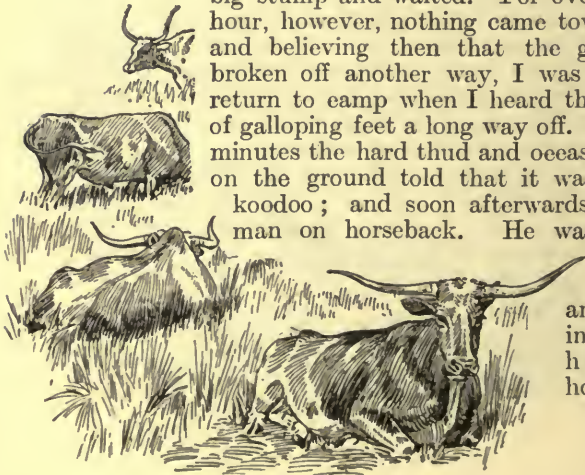


of this sort of thing. We were out hunting once in a mounted party, but to spare a tired horse I went on foot and took up my stand in a game run among some thorn trees on the low spur of a hill, while the others made a big circuit to head off a troop of koodoo. Among our party there was one who was very nervous: he had been lost once for six or eight hours, and being haunted by the dread of being lost again, his nerve was all gone and he would not go fifty yards without a companion. In the excitement of shooting at and galloping after the koodoo probably this dread was forgotten for a moment: he himself could not tell how it happened that he became separated, and no one else had noticed him.

The strip of wood along the hills in which I was waiting was four or five miles long but only from one to three hundred yards wide, a mere fringe enclosing the little range of kopjes; and between the stems of the trees I could see our camp and waggons in the open a quarter of a mile away. Ten or twelve shots faintly heard in the distance told me that the others were on to the koodoo, and knowing the preference of those animals for the bush I took cover behind a

big stump and waited. For over half an hour, however, nothing came towards me, and believing then that the game had broken off another way, I was about to return to camp when I heard the tapping of galloping feet a long way off. In a few minutes the hard thud and occasional ring on the ground told that it was not the koodoo; and soon afterwards I saw a

man on horseback. He was leaning eagerly forward and thumping the exhausted horse with



his rifle and his heels to keep up its staggering gallop. I looked about quickly to see what it was he was chasing that could have slipped past me unnoticed, but there was nothing; then thinking there had been an accident and he was coming for help, I stepped out into the open and waited for him to come up. I stood quite still, and he galloped past within ten yards of me—so close that his muttered “Get on, you brute; get on, get on!” as he thumped away at his poor tired horse, were perfectly audible.

“What’s up, sportsman?” I asked, no louder than you would say it across a tennis-court; but the words brought him up, white-faced and terrified, and he half slid, half tumbled, off the horse gasping out, “I was lost, I was lost!” How he had managed to keep within that strip of bush, without once getting into the open where he would have seen the line of kopjes to which I had told him to stick or could have seen the waggons and the smoke of the big camp-fire, he could never explain. I turned him round where he stood, and through the trees showed him the white tents of the waggons and the cattle grazing near by, but he was too dazed to understand or explain anything.

Buggins who was with us in the first season was no hunter, but he was a good shot and not a bad fellow. In his case there was no tragedy; there was much laughter and—to me—a wonderful revelation. He showed us, as in a play, how you can be lost; how you can walk for ever in one little circle, as though drawn to a centre by magnetic force, and how you can miss seeing things in the bush if they do not move.

We had outspanned in a flat covered with close grass about

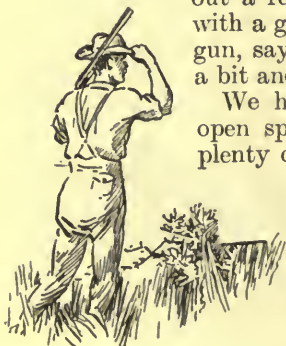


two feet high and shady flat-topped thorn trees. The waggons, four in number, were drawn up a few yards off the road, two abreast. The grass was sweet and plentiful; the day was hot and still; and as we had had a very long early morning trek there was not much inclination to move. The cattle soon filled themselves and lay down to sleep; the boys did the same; and we, when breakfast was over, got into the shade of the waggons, some to sleep and others to smoke.

Buggins—that was his pet name—was a passenger returning to “England, Home, and Beauty”—that is to say, literally, to a comfortable home, admiring sisters and a rich indulgent father—after having sought his fortune unsuccessfully on the gold fields for fully four months. Buggins was good-natured, unselfish, and credulous; but he had one fault—he ‘yapped’: he talked until our heads buzzed. He used to sleep contentedly in a rumpled tarpaulin all through the night treks and come up fresh as a daisy and full of accumulated chat at the morning outspan, just when we—unless work or sport called for us—were wanting to get some sleep.

We knew well enough what to expect, so after breakfast Jimmy, who understood Buggins well, told him pleasantly that he could “sleep, shoot, or shut up.” To shut up was impossible, and to sleep again—without a rest—difficult, even for Buggins; so with a good-natured laugh he took the shot gun, saying that he “would potter around a bit and give us a treat.” Well, he did!

We had outspanned on the edge of an open space in the thorn bush; there are plenty of them to be found in the Bushveld—spaces a few hundred yards in diameter, like open park land, where not a single tree breaks the expanse of wavy yellow grass. The waggons with their greyish tents and buck sails and dusty wood-



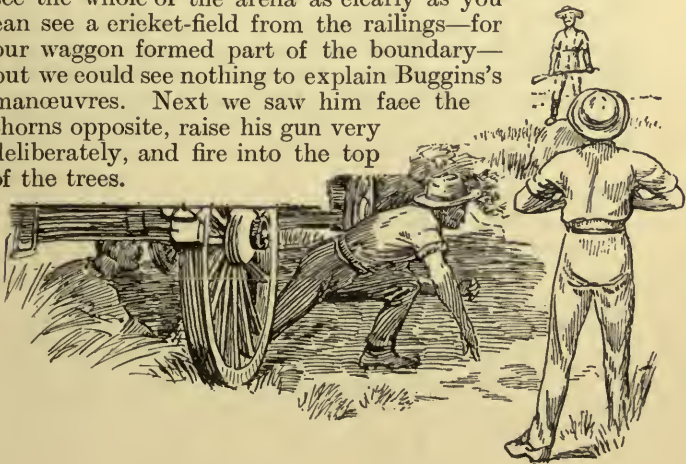


· "SAY, BUGGINS, WHAT IN THUNDER ARE YOU DOING?"

work stood in the fringe of the trees where this little arena touched the road, and into it sallied Buggins, gently drawn by the benevolent purpose of giving us a treat. What he hoped to find in the open on that sweltering day he only could tell; we knew that no living thing but lizards would be out of the shade just then, but we wanted to find him employment harmless to him and us.

He had been gone for more than half an hour when we heard a shot, and a few minutes later Jimmy's voice roused us.

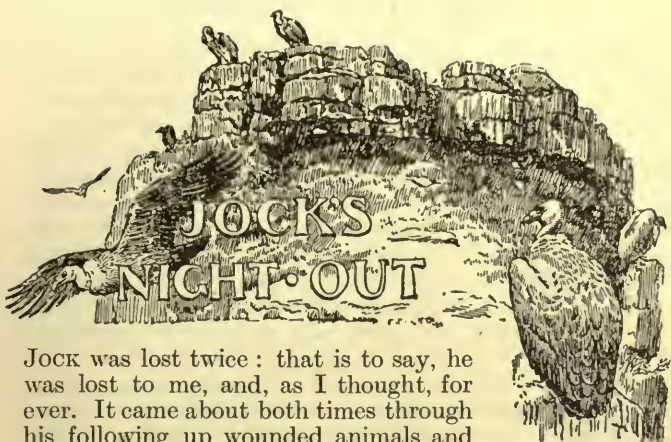
"What the dickens is Buggins doing?" he asked in a tone so puzzled and interested that we all turned to watch that sportsman. According to Jimmy, he had been walking about in an erratic way for some time on the far side of the open ground—going from the one end to the other and then back again; then disappearing for a few minutes in the bush and re-appearing to again manœuvre in the open in loops and circles, angles and straight lines. Now he was walking about at a smart pace, looking from side to side apparently searching for something. We could see the whole of the arena as clearly as you can see a cricket-field from the railings—for our waggon formed part of the boundary—but we could see nothing to explain Buggins's manœuvres. Next we saw him face the thorns opposite, raise his gun very deliberately, and fire into the top of the trees.



"Green pigeons," said Jimmy firmly; and we all agreed that Buggins was after specimens for stuffing; but either our guess was wrong or his aim was bad, for after standing dead still for a minute he resumed his vigorous walk. By this time Buggins fairly fascinated us; even the kaffirs had roused each other and were watching him. Away he went at once off to our left, and there he repeated the performance, but again made no attempt to pick up anything and showed no further interest in whatever it was he had fired at, but turned right about face and walked across the open ground in our direction until he was only a couple of hundred yards away. There he stopped and began to look about him, and making off some few yards in another direction climbed on to a fair-sized ant-heap five or six feet high, and balancing himself cautiously on this he deliberately fired off both barrels in quick succession. Then the same idea struck us all together, and "Buggins is lost" came from several—all choking with laughter.

Jimmy got up and, stepping out into the open beside the waggon, called, "Say, Buggins, what in thunder *are* you doing?"

To see Buggins slide off the ant-heap and shuffle shamefacedly back to the waggon before a gallery of four white men and a lot of kaffirs, all cracking and crying with laughter, was a sight never to be forgotten.



JOCK was lost twice : that is to say, he was lost to me, and, as I thought, for ever. It came about both times through his following up wounded animals and leaving me behind, and happened in the days when our hunting was all done on foot ; when I could afford a horse and could keep pace with him that difficulty did not trouble us. The experience with the impala had made me very careful not to let him go unless I felt sure that the game was hard hit and that he would be able to pull it down or bay it. But it is not always easy to judge that. A broken leg shows at once ; but a body shot is very difficult to place, and animals shot through the lungs, and even through the lower part of the heart, often go away at a crackling pace and are out of sight in no time, perhaps to keep it up for miles, perhaps to drop dead within a few minutes.

The great charm of Bushveld hunting is its variety : you never know what will turn up next—the only certainty being that it will not be what you are expecting.

The herd-boy came in one afternoon to say that there was a stembuck feeding among the oxen only a couple of hundred yards away. He had been quite close to it, he said, and it was very tame. Game, so readily alarmed by the sight of white men, will



often take no notice of natives, allowing them to approach to very close quarters. They are also easily stalked under cover of cattle or horses, and much more readily approached on horseback than on foot. The presence of other animals seems to give them confidence or to excite mild curiosity without alarm, and thus distract attention from the man.

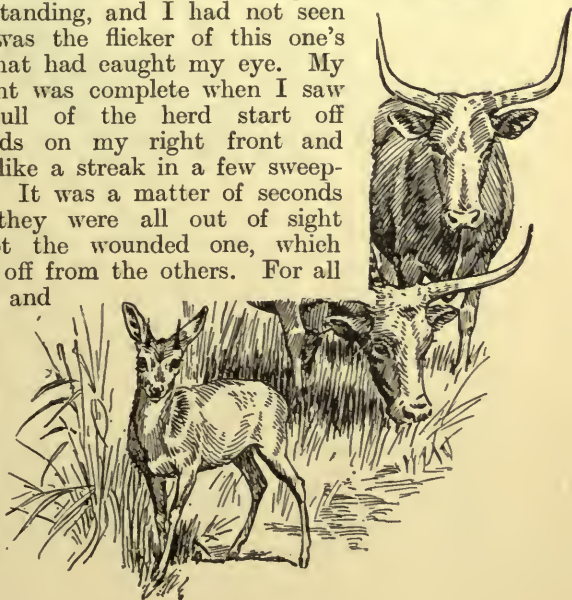
In this case the bonny little red-brown fellow was not a bit scared; he maintained his presence of mind admirably; from time to time he turned his head our way and, with his large but shapely and most sensitive ears thrown forward examined us frankly while he moved slightly one way or another so as to keep under cover of the oxen and busily continue his browsing.

In and out among some seventy head of cattle we played hide-and-seek for quite a while—I not daring to fire for fear of hitting one of the bullocks—until at last he found himself manœuvred out of the troop; and then without giving me a chance he was off into the bush in a few frisky skips. I followed quietly, knowing that as he was on the feed and not scared he would not go far.

Moving along silently under good cover I reached a thick scrubby bush and peered over the top of it to search the grass under the surrounding thorn trees for the little red-brown form. I was looking about low down in the russety grass—for he was only about twice the size of Jock, and not easy to spot—when a movement on a higher level caught my eye. It was just the flip of a fly-tickled ear; but it was a movement where all else was still, and instantly the form of a koodoo cow appeared before me as a picture is thrown on a screen by a magic-lantern. There it stood within fifty yards, the soft grey-and-white looking still

softer in the shadow of the thorns, but as clear to me—and as still—as a figure carved in stone. The stem of a mimosa hid the shoulders, but all the rest was plainly visible as it stood there utterly unconscious of danger. The tree made a dead shot almost impossible, but the risk of trying for another position was too great, and I fired. The thud of the bullet and the tremendous bound of the koodoo straight up in the air told that the shot had gone home; but these things were for a time forgotten in the surprise that followed. At the sound of the shot twenty other koodoo jumped into life and sight before me. The one I had seen and shot was but one of a herd all dozing peacefully in the shade, and strangest of all, it was the one that was farthest from me. To the right and left of this one, at distances from fifteen to thirty yards from me, the magnificent creatures had been standing, and I had not seen them; it was the flicker of this one's ear alone that had caught my eye. My bewilderment was complete when I saw the big bull of the herd start off twenty yards on my right front and pass away like a streak in a few sweeping strides. It was a matter of seconds only and they were all out of sight—all except the wounded one, which had turned off from the others. For all

the flurry and confusion I had not lost sight of her, and noting her tucked-up appearance and shortened strides set Jock on her

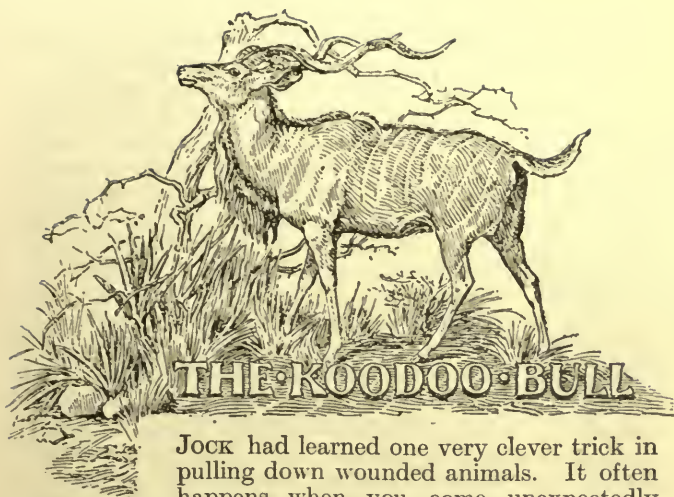


trail, believing that she would be down in a few minutes.

It is not necessary to go over it all again: it was much the same as the impala chase. I came back tired disappointed and beaten, and without Jock. It was only after darkness set in that things began to look serious. When it came to midnight, with the camp wrapped in silence and in sleep, and there was still no sign of Jock, things looked very black indeed.

I heard his panting breath before it was possible to see anything. It was past one o'clock when he returned.





JOCK had learned one very clever trick in pulling down wounded animals. It often happens when you come unexpectedly upon game that they are off before you see them, and the only chance you have of getting anything is with a running shot. If they go straight from you the shot is not a very difficult one, although you see nothing but the lifting and falling hind-quarters as they canter away; and a common result of such a shot is the breaking of one of the hind-legs between the hip and the hock. Jock made his discovery while following a rietbuck which I had wounded in this way. He had made several tries at its nose and throat, but the buck was going too strongly and was out of reach; moreover it would not stop or turn when he headed it, but charged straight on, bounding over him. In trying once more for the throat he cannoned against the buck's shoulder and was sent rolling yards away. This seemed to madden him: racing up behind he flew at the dangling leg, caught it at the shin, and thrusting his feet well out, simply dragged until the buck slowed down, and then began furiously tugging sideways. The crossing of the legs brought the wounded



animal down immediately and Jock had it by the throat before it could rise again.

Every one who is good at anything has some favourite method or device of his own: that was Jock's. It may have come to him, as it comes to many, by accident; but having once got it, he perfected it and used it whenever it was possible. Only once he made a mistake; and he paid for it—very nearly with his life.

He had already used this device successfully several times, but so far only with the smaller buck. This day he did what I should have thought to be impossible for a dog of three or four times his size. I left

the scene of torn carcase and crunched bones, consumed by regrets and disappointment; each fresh detail only added to my feeling of disgust, but Jock did not seem to mind; he jumped out briskly as soon as I started walking in earnest, as though he recognised that we were making a fresh start, and he began to look forward immediately.

The little bare flat where the koodoo had fallen for the last time was at the head of one of those depressions which collect the waters of the summer floods and, changing gradually into shallow valleys, are eventually scoured out and become the dongas—dry in winter but full charged with muddy flood in summer—which drain the Bushveld to its rivers. Here and there where an impermeable rock formation crosses these channels there are deep pools which, except in years of drought, last all through the winter; and these are the drinking-places of the game. I followed this one down for a couple of miles without any definite purpose until the sight of some greener and denser wild figs suggested that there might be water, and perhaps a rietbuck or a duiker near by. As we reached the trees Jock showed unmistakable signs of interest in something, and with the utmost caution I moved from tree to tree in the shady grove towards where

it seemed the water-hole might be. There were bushy wild plums flanking the grove, and beyond them the ordinary scattered thorns. As I reached this point, and stopped to look out between the bushes on to the more open ground, a koodoo cow walked quietly up the slope from the water, but before there was time to raise the rifle her easy stride had carried her behind a small mimosa tree. I took one quick step out to follow her up and found myself face to face at less than a dozen yards with a grand koodoo bull. It is impossible to convey in words any real idea of the scene and how things happened. Of course, it was only for a fraction of a second that we looked straight into each other's eyes; then, as if by magic, he was round and going from me with the overwhelming rush of speed and strength and weight combined. Yet it is the first sight that remains with me: the proud head, the huge spiral horns, and the wide soft staring eyes—before the wildness of panic had stricken them. The picture seems photographed on eye and brain, never to be forgotten. A whirlwind of dust and leaves marked his course, and through it I fired, unsteadied by excitement and hardly able to see. Then the right hind-leg swung out and the great creature sank for a moment, almost to the ground; and the sense of triumph, the longed for and unexpected success, 'went to my head' like a rush of blood.

There had been no time to aim, and the shot—a real snap shot—was not at all a bad one. It was after that that the natural effect of such a meeting and such a chance began to tell. Thinking it all out beforehand does not help much, for things never happen as they are expected to; and even months of practice among the smaller kinds will not ensure a steady



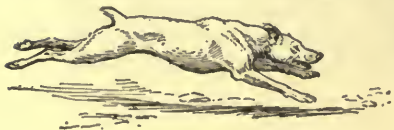
nerve when you just come face to face with big game—there seems to be too much at stake.

I fired again as the koodoo recovered himself, but he was then seventy or eighty yards away and partly hidden at times by trees and scrub. He struck up the slope, following the line of the troop through the scattered thorns, and there, running hard and dropping quickly to my knee for steadier aim, I fired again and again—but each time a longer shot and more obscured by the intervening bush; and no tell-tale thud came back to cheer me on.

Forgetting the last night's experience, forgetting everything except how we had twice chased and twice lost them, seeing only another and the grandest prize slipping away, I sent Jock on and followed as fast as I could. Once more the koodoo came in sight—just a chance at four hundred yards as he reached an open space on rising ground. Jock was already closing up, but still unseen, and the noble old fellow turned full broadside to me as he stopped to look back. Once more I knelt, gripping hard and holding my breath to snatch a moment's steadiness, and fired; but I missed again, and as the bullet struck under him he plunged forward and disappeared over the rise at the moment that Jock, dashing out from the scrub, reached his heels.

The old Martini carbine had one bad fault; even I could not deny that; years of rough and careless treatment in all sorts of weather—for it was only a discarded old Mounted Police weapon—had told on it, and both in barrel and breech it was well pitted with rust scars. One result of this was that it was always jamming, and unless the cartridges were kept well greased the empty shells would stick and the ejector fail to work; and this was almost sure to happen when the carbine became hot from quick firing.

It jammed now, and fearing to lose sight of the chase I dared not stop a second, but ran



on, struggling from time to time to wrench the breech open.

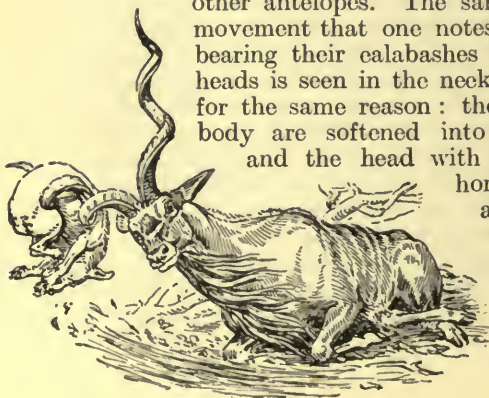
Reaching the place where they had disappeared, I saw with intense relief and excitement Jock and the koodoo having it out less than a hundred yards away. The koodoo's leg was broken right up in the ham, and it was a terrible handieap for an animal so big and heavy, but his nimbleness and quickness were astonishing. Using the sound hind-leg as a pivot he swung round, always facing his enemy; Jock was in and out, here, there and everywhere, as a buzzing fly torments one on a hot day; and indeed, to the koodoo just then he was the fly and nothing more; he could only annoy his big enemy, and was playing with his life to do it. Sometimes he tried to get round; sometimes pretended to charge straight in, stopping himself with all four feet spread—just out of reach; then like a red streak he would fly through the air with a snap for the koodoo's nose. It was a fight for life and a grand sight; for the koodoo, in spite of his wound, easily held his own. No doubt he had fought out many a life and death struggle to win and hold his place as lord of the herd and knew every trick of attack and defence. Maybe too he was blazing with anger and contempt for this persistent little gad-fly that worried him so and kept out of reach. Sometimes he snorted and feinted to charge; at other times backed slowly, giving way to draw the enemy on; then with a sudden lunge the great horns swished like a scythe with a tremendous reach out, easily covering the spot where Jock had been a fraction of a second before. There were pauses too in which he watched his tormentor steadily, with occasional impatient shakes of the head, or, raising it to full height, towered up a monument of splendid and contemptuous indifference, looking about with big angry but unfrightened eyes for the herd—his herd—that had deserted him; or with a slight toss of his head he would walk limpingly forward, forcing the ignored Jock before him; then, interrupted and annoyed

by a flying snap at his nose, he would spring forward and strike with the sharp cloven fore-foot—zip-zip-zip—at Jock as he landed. Any one of the vicious flashing stabs would have pinned him to the earth and finished him; but Jock was never there.

Keeping what cover there was I came up slowly behind them, struggling and using all the force I dared, short of smashing the lever, to get the empty cartridge out. At last one of the turns in the fight brought me in view, and the koodoo dashed off again. For a little way the pace seemed as great as ever, but it soon died away; the driving power was gone; the strain and weight on the one sound leg and the tripping of the broken one were telling; and from that on I was close enough to see it all. In the first rush the koodoo seemed to dash right over Jock—the swirl of dust and leaves and the bulk of the koodoo hiding him; then I saw him close abreast, looking up at it and making furious jumps for its nose, alternately from one side and the other, as they raced along together. The koodoo holding its nose high and well forward, as they do when on the move, with the horns thrown back almost horizontally, was out of his reach and galloped heavily on completely ignoring his attacks.

There is a suggestion of grace and poise in the movement of the koodoo bull's head as he gallops through the bush which is one of his distinctions above the other antelopes. The same supple balancing movement that one notes in the native girls bearing their calabashes of water upon their heads is seen in the neck of the koodoo, and for the same reason: the movements of the body are softened into mere undulations,

and the head with its immense spiral horns seems to sail along in voluntary company — indeed almost as though it were bearing the body below.



At the fourth or fifth attempt by Jock a spurt from the koodoo brought him cannoning against its shoulder, and he was sent rolling unnoticed yards away. He scrambled instantly to his feet, but found himself again behind: it may have been this fact that inspired the next attempt, or perhaps he realised that attack in front was useless; for this time he went determinedly for the broken leg. It swung about in wild eccentric curves, but at the third or fourth attempt he got it and hung on; and with all fours spread he dragged along the ground. The first startled spring of the koodoo jerked him into the air; but there was no let go now, and although dragged along the rough ground and dashed about among the scrub, sometimes swinging in the air, and sometimes sliding on his back, he pulled from side to side in futile attempts to throw the big animal. Ineffectual and even hopeless as it looked at first, Jock's attacks soon began to tell; the koodoo made wild efforts to get at him, but with every turn he turned too, and did it so vigorously that the staggering animal swayed over and had to plunge violently to recover its balance. So they turned, this way and that, until a wilder plunge swung Jock off his feet, throwing the broken leg across the other one; then, with feet firmly planted, Jock tugged again, and the koodoo trying to regain its footing was tripped by the crossed legs and came down with a crash.

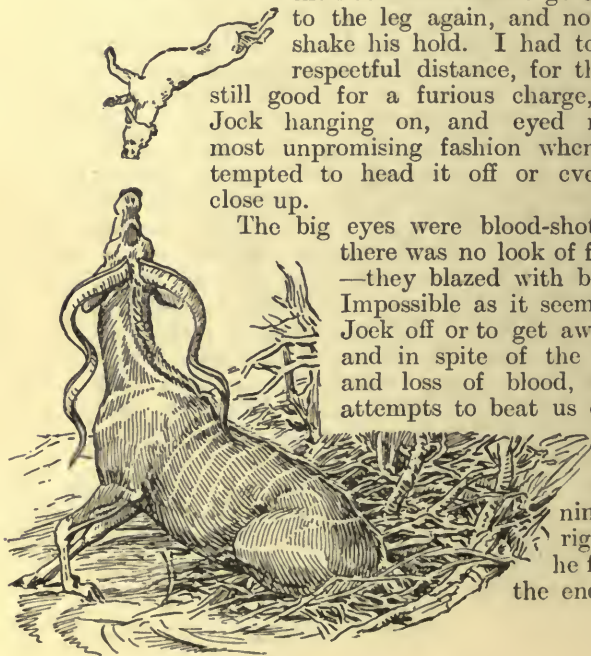
As it fell Jock was round and fastened on the nose; but it was no duiker, impala or rietbuck that he had to deal with this time. The koodoo gave a snort of indignation and shook its head: as a terrier shakes a rat, so it shook Jock, whipping the ground with his swinging body, and with another indignant snort and toss of the head flung him off, sending him skidding along the ground on his back. The koodoo had fallen on the wounded leg and failed to rise with the first effort; Jock while still slithering along the ground on his back was tearing at the air with his feet in his mad haste to get back to the attack, and as he scrambled up, he raced in again with head down and the little

eyes black with fury. He was too mad to be wary, and my heart stood still as the long horns went round with a swish ; one black point seemed to pierce him through and through, showing a foot out the other side, and a jerky twist of the great head sent him twirling like a tip-cat eight or ten feet up in the air. It had just missed him, passing under his stomach next to the hind-legs ; but, until he dropped with a thud and, tearing and scrambling to his feet, he raced in again, I felt certain he had been gored through.

The koodoo was up again then. I had rushed in with rifle clubbed, with the wild idea of stunning it before it could rise, but was met by the lowered horns and unmistakable signs of charging, and beat a retreat quite as speedy as my charge.

It was a running fight from that on : the instant the koodoo turned to go Jock was on to the leg again, and nothing could shake his hold. I had to keep at a respectful distance, for the bull was still good for a furious charge, even with Jock hanging on, and eyed me in the most unpromising fashion whenever I attempted to head it off or even to come close up.

The big eyes were blood-shot then, but there was no look of fear in them—they blazed with baffled rage. Impossible as it seemed to shake Jock off or to get away from us, and in spite of the broken leg and loss of blood, the furious attempts to beat us off did not slacken. It was a desperate running fight, and right bravely he fought it to the end.





"HIS SHOULDER HUMPED AGAINST THE TREE, HE STOOD THE TUG OF WAR"

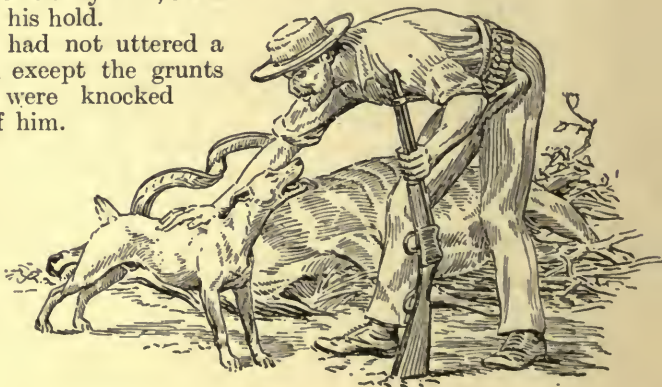
Partly barring the way in front were the whitened trunks and branches of several trees struck down by some storm of the year before, and running ahead of the koodoo I made for these, hoping to find a stick straight enough for a ramrod to force the empty cartridge out. As I reached them the koodoo made for me with half a dozen plunges that sent me flying off for other cover; but the broken leg swayed over one of the branches, and Jock with feet planted against the tree hung on; and the koodoo, turning furiously on him, stumbled, floundered, tripped, and came down with a crash amongst the crackling wood. Once more like a flash Jock was over the fallen body and had fastened on the nose—but only to be shaken worse than before. The koodoo literally flogged the ground with him, and for an instant I shut my eyes; it seemed as if the plucky dog would be beaten into pulp. The bull tried to chop him with its fore-feet, but could not raise itself enough, and at each pause Jock, with his watchful little eyes ever on the alert, dodged his body round to avoid the chopping feet without letting go his hold. Then with a snort of fury the koodoo, half rising, gave its head a wild upward sweep, and shook. As a springing rod flings a fish the koodoo flung Jock over its head and on to a low flat-topped thorn-tree behind. The dog somersaulted slowly as he circled in the air, dropped on his back in the thorns some twelve feet from the ground, and came tumbling down through the branches. Surely the tree saved him, for it seemed as if such a throw must break his back. As it was he dropped with a sickening thump; yet even as he fell I saw again the scrambling tearing movement, as if he was trying to race back to the fight even before he reached ground. Without a pause to breathe or even to look, he was in again and trying once more for the nose.

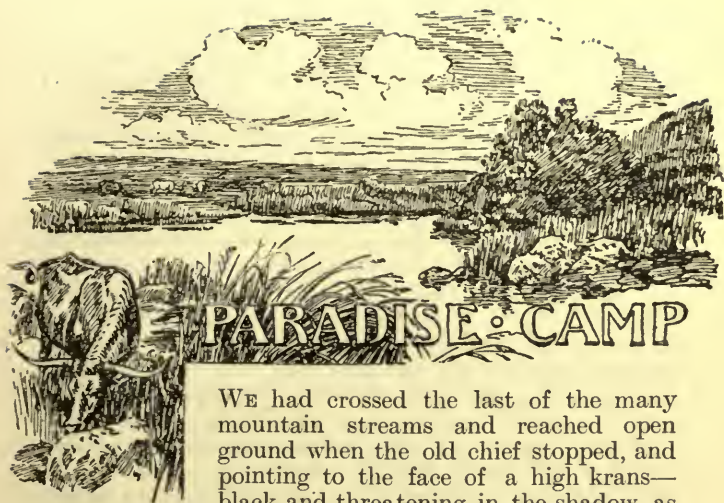
The koodoo lying partly on its side, with both hind-legs hampered by the mass of dead wood, could not rise, but it swept the clear space in front with the terrible horns, and for some time kept Jock at bay.

I tried stick after stick for a ram-rod, but without success; at last, in desperation at seeing Jock once more hanging to the koodoo's nose, I hooked the lever on to a branch and setting my foot against the tree wrenched until the empty cartridge flew out and I went staggering backwards.

In the last struggle, while I was busy with the rifle, the koodoo had moved, and it was then lying against one of the fallen trunks. The first swing to get rid of Jock had literally slogged him against the tree; the second swing swept him under it where a bend in the trunk raised it about a foot from the ground, and gaining his foothold there Jock stood fast—there, there, with his feet planted firmly and his shoulder humped against the dead tree, he stood this tug-of-war. The koodoo with its head twisted back, as caught at the end of the swing, could put no weight to the pull; yet the wrenches it gave to free itself drew the nose and upper lip out like tough rubber and seemed to stretch Jock's neck visibly. I had to come round within a few feet of them to avoid risk of hitting Jock, and it seemed impossible for bone and muscle to stand the two or three terrible wrenches that I saw. The shot was the end; and as the splendid head dropped slowly over, Jock let go his hold.

He had not uttered a sound except the grunts that were knocked out of him.





PARADISE CAMP

WE had crossed the last of the many mountain streams and reached open ground when the old chief stopped, and pointing to the face of a high krans—black and threatening in the shadow, as it seemed to overhang us—said that somewhere up there was a cave which was the tiger's home, and it was from this safe refuge that he raided the countryside.

The kraal was not far off. From the top of the spur we could look round, as from the pit of some vast coliseum, and see the huge wall of the Berg towering up above and half enclosing us, the whole arena roofed over by the star-spattered sky. The brilliant moonlight picked out every ridge and hill, deepening the velvet black of the shadowed valleys, and on the rise before us there was the twinkling light of a small fire, and the sound of voices came to us, borne on the still night air, so clearly that words picked out here and there were repeated by our boys with grunting comments and chuckles of amusement.

We started on again down an easy slope passing through some bush, and at the bottom came on level ground thinly covered with big shady trees and scattered undergrowth. As we walked briskly through the flecked and dappled light and shade, we were startled by the sudden and furious rush of Jess and Jock off the path and away into the scrub on the left; and

immediately after there was a grunting noise, a crashing and scrambling, and then one sharp clear yelp of pain from one of the dogs. The old chief ran back behind us, shouting "Ingwa, ingwa!" (Tiger, tiger). We slipped our rifles round and stood facing front, unable to see anything and not knowing what to expect. There were sounds of some sort in the bush—something like a faint scratching, and something like smothered sobbing grunts, but so indistinct as to be more ominous and disquieting than absolute silence.

"He has killed the dogs," the old chief said, in a low voice.

But as he said it there was a rustle in front, and something came out towards us. The guns were up and levelled, instantly, but dropped again when we saw it was a dog; and Jess came back limping badly and stopping every few paces to shake her head and rub her mouth against her fore-paws. She was in great pain and breathed out faint barely-audible whines from time to time.

We waited for minutes, but Jock did not appear; and as the curious sounds still came from the bush we moved forward in open order, very slowly and with infinite caution. As we got closer, scouting each bush and open space, the sounds grew clearer, and suddenly it came to me that it was the noise of a body being dragged and the grunting breathing of a dog. I called sharply to Jock and the sound stopped; and taking a few paces forward then, I saw him in a moon-lit space turning round and round on the pivot of his hind-legs and swinging or dragging something much bigger than himself.

Jim gave a yell and shot past me, plunging his assegai into the object and shouting "Porcupine, porcupine," at the top of his voice. We were all round it in a couple of seconds, but I think the porcupine was as good as dead even before Jim had stabbed it. Jock was still holding on grimly, tugging with all his might and always with the same movement of swinging it round him, or, of himself circling round it—perhaps that is the fairer description, for the porcupine was much the heavier. He

had it by the throat where the flesh is bare of quills, and had kept himself out of reach of the terrible spikes by pulling away all the time, just as he had done with the duiker and other buck to avoid their hind-feet.

In the bright light of the fire that night, as Jock lay beside me having his share of the porcupine steaks, I noticed something curious about his chest, and on looking closer found the whole of his white 'shirt front' speckled with dots of blood; he had been pricked in dozens of places, and it was clear that it had been no walk-over for him; he must have had a pretty rough handling before he got the porcupine on the swing. He was none the worse, however, and was the picture of contentment as he lay beside me in the ring facing the fire.

But Jess was a puzzle. From the time that she had come hobbling back to us, carrying her one foot in the air and stopping to rub her mouth on her paws, we had been trying to find out what was the matter. The foot trouble was clear enough, for there was a quill fifteen inches long and as stiff and thick as a lead pencil still piercing the ball of her foot, with the needle-like point sticking out between her toes. Fortunately it had not been driven far through and the hole was small, so that once it was drawn and the foot bandaged she got along fairly well. It was not the foot that was troubling her; all through the evening she kept repeating the movement of her head, either rubbing it on her front legs or wiping her muzzle with the paws, much as a cat does when washing its face. She would not touch food and could not lie still for five minutes; and we could do nothing to help her.

No one had doubted Jess's courage, even when we saw her come back alone: we knew there was something wrong, but in spite of every care and effort we could not find out what it was, and poor old Jess went through the night in suffering, making no sound, but moving from place to place weary and restless, giving long tired quivering sighs, and pawing at her mouth from time to time. In the morning light



we again looked her all over carefully, and especially opened her mouth and examined that and her nostrils, but could find nothing to show what was wrong.

The puzzle was solved by accident : Ted was sitting on the ground when she came up to him, looking wistfully into his face again with one of the mute appeals for help.

"What is it, Jess, old girl?" he said, and reaching out, he caught her head in both hands and drew her towards him; but with a sharp exclamation he instantly let go again, pricked by something, and a drop of blood oozed from one finger-tip. Under Jess's right ear there was a hard sharp point just showing through the skin: we all felt it, and when the skin was forced back we saw it was the tip of a porcupine quill. There was no pulling it out or moving it, however, nor could we for a long time find where it had entered. At last Ted noticed what looked like a tiny narrow strip of bark adhering to the outside of her lower lip, and this turned out to be the broken end of the quill, snapped off close to the flesh; not even the end of the quill was visible—only the little strip that had peeled off in the breaking.

Poor old Jess! We had no very grand appliances for surgery, and had to slit her lip down with an ordinary skinning knife. Ted held her between his knees and gripped her head with both hands, while one of us pulled with steel pliers on the broken quill until it came out. The quill had pierced her lower lip, entered the gums beside the front teeth, run all along the jaw and through the flesh behind, coming out just below the ear. It was over seven inches long. She struggled a little under the rough treatment, and there was a protesting whimper when we tugged; but she did not let out one cry under all the pain.

We knew then that Jess had done her share in the fight, and guessed that it was she who in her reckless charge had rolled the porcupine over and given Jock his chance.

THE TIGER AND BABOONS

OUR route lay along the side of the spur, skirting the rocky backbone and winding between occasional boulders, clumps of trees and bush, and we had moved on only a little way when a loud "waugh" from a baboon on the mountain behind made us stop to look back.

The hoarse shout was repeated several times, and each time more loudly and emphatically; it seemed like the warning call of a sentry who had seen us. Moved by curiosity we turned aside on to the ridge itself, and from the top of a big rock scanned the almost precipitous face opposite. The spur on which we stood was divided from the Berg itself only by a deep but narrow kloof or ravine, and every detail of the mountain side stood out in the clear evening air, but against the many-coloured rocks the grey figure of a baboon was not easy to find as long as it remained still, and although from time to time the barking roar was repeated, we were still scanning the opposite hill when one of the boys pointed down the slope immediately below us and called out, "There, there, Baas!"

The troop of baboons had evidently been quite close to us—hidden from us only by the little line of rocks—and on getting warning from their sentry on the mountain had stolen quietly away and were then disappearing into the timbered depth of the ravine. We sat still to watch them come out on the opposite side



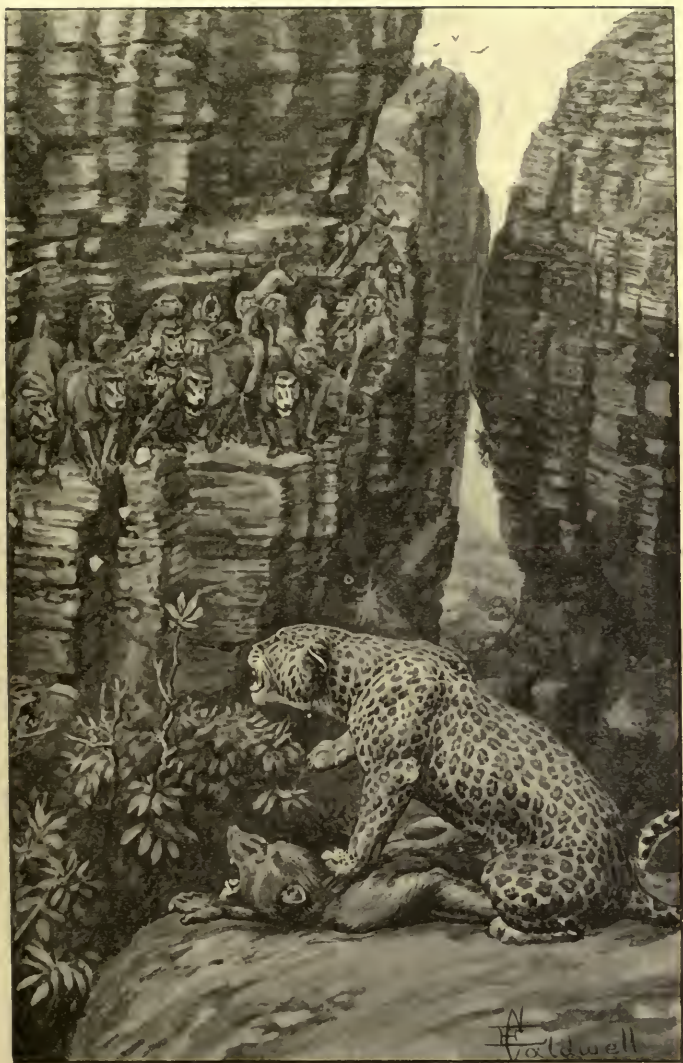


a few minutes later and clamber up the rocky face, for they are always worth watching; but while we watched, the stillness was broken by an agonised scream—horribly human in its expression of terror—followed by roars, barks, bellows and screams from scores of voices in every key; and the crackle of breaking sticks and the rattle of stones added to the medley of sound as the baboons raced out of the wood and up the bare rocky slope.

“What is it?” “What’s the matter?” “There’s something after them.” “Look, look! there they come:” burst from one and another of us as we watched the extraordinary scene. The cries from below seemed to waken the whole mountain; great booming “waughs” came from different places far apart and ever so high up the face of the Berg; each big roar seemed to act like a trumpet-call and bring forth a multitude of others; and the air rang with bewildering shouts and echoes volleying round the kloofs and faces of the Berg. The strange thing was that the baboons did not continue their terrified scramble up the mountain, but, once out of the bush, they turned and rallied. Forming an irregular semi-circle they faced down hill, thrusting their heads forward with sudden jerks as though to launch their cries with greater vehemence, and feinting to charge; they showered loose earth, stones and débris of all sorts down with awkward underhand scrapes of their fore-paws, and gradually but surely descended to within a dozen yards of the bush’s edge.

“Baas, Baas, the tiger! Look, the tiger! There, there on the rock below!”

Jim shot the words out in vehement gusts, choky with excitement; and true enough, there the tiger was. The long spotted body was crouched on a flat rock just below the baboons; he was broad-side to



"SCRAMBLING DOWN THE FACE CAME MORE AND MORE BABOONS"

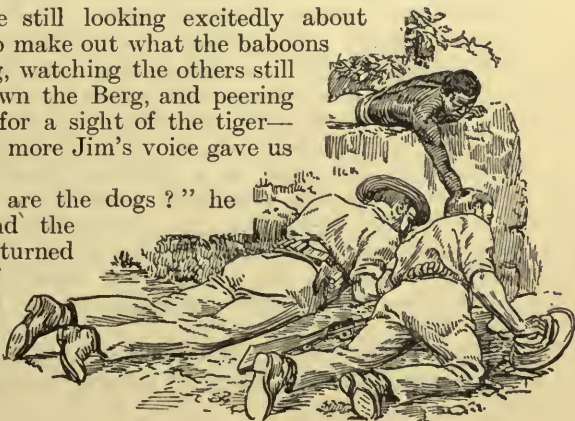
us, with his fore-quarters slightly raised and his face turned towards the baboons; with wide-opened mouth he snarled savagely at the advancing line, and with right paw raised made threatening dabs in their direction. His left paw pinned down the body of a baboon.

The voices from the mountain boomed louder and nearer as, clattering and scrambling down the face, came more and more baboons: there must have been hundreds of them; the semicircle grew thicker and blacker, more and more threatening, foot by foot closer. The tiger raised himself a little more and took swift looks from side to side across the advancing front, and then his nerve went, and with one spring he shot from the rock into the bush.

There was an instant forward rush of the half-moon, and the rock was covered with roaring baboons, swarming over their rescued comrade; and a moment later the crowd scrambled up the slope again, taking the tiger's victim with them. In that seething rabble I could pick out nothing, but all the kaffirs maintained they could see the mauled one dragged along by its arms by two others, much as a child might be helped uphill.

We were still looking excitedly about—trying to make out what the baboons were doing, watching the others still coming down the Berg, and peering anxiously for a sight of the tiger—when once more Jim's voice gave us a shock.

"Where are the dogs?" he asked; and the question turned us cold. If they had gone after the baboons they





were as good as dead already—nothing could save them. Calling was useless: nothing could be heard in the roar and din that the enraged animals still kept up. We watched the other side of the ravine with something more than anxiety, and when Joek's reddish-looking form broke through the bracken near to the tiger's rock, I felt like shutting my eyes till all was over. We saw him move close under the rock and then disappear.

We watched for some seconds—it may have been a minute, but it seemed an eternity—and then, feeling the utter futility of waiting there, jumped off the rock and ran down the slope in the hope that the dogs would hear us call from there.

From where the slope was steepest we looked down into the bed of the stream at the bottom of the ravine, and the two dogs were there: they were moving cautiously down the wide stony watercourse just as we had seen them move in the morning, their noses thrown up and heads turning slowly from side to side. We knew what was coming; there was no time to reach them through the bush below; the cries of the baboons made calling useless; and the three of us sat down with rifles levelled ready to fire at the first sight. With gun gripped and breath hard held, watching intently every bush and tree and rock, every spot of light and shade, we sat—not daring to move. Then, over the edge of a big rock overlooking the two dogs, appeared something round; and, smoothly yet swiftly and with a snake-like movement, the long spotted body followed the head and, flattened against the rock, erept stealthily forward until the tiger looked straight down upon Jess and Joek.

The three rifles cracked like one, and with a howl of rage and pain the tiger shot out over the dogs' heads,

raced along the stony bed, and suddenly plunging its nose into the ground, pitched over—dead.

It was shot through the heart, and down the ribs on each side were the scraped marks of the trap.





BUFFALO BUSHFIRE & WILD DOGS

THE summer slipped away — the full-pulsed ripeness of the year ; beauty and passion ; sunshine and storm ; long spells of peace and gentleness, of springing life and radiant glory ; short intervals of reckless tempest and destructive storm ! Among the massed evergreens of the woods there stood out here and there bright spots of colour, the careless dabs from Nature's artist hand ; yellow and brown, orange and crimson, all vividly distinct, yet all in perfect harmony. The rivers, fed from the replenished mountains' stores, ran full but clear ; the days were bright ; the nights were cold ; the grass was rank and seeding ; and it was time to go.

Once more the Bushveld beckoned us away.

We picked a spot where grass and water were good, and waited for the rivers to fall ; and it was while loitering there that a small hunting party from the fields making for the Sabi came across us and camped for the night. In the morning two of our party joined them for a few days to try for something big.

It was too early in the season for really good sport. The rank tropical grass—six to eight feet high in most places, twelve to fourteen in some—was too green to

burn yet, and the stout stems and heavy seed heads made walking as difficult as in a field of tangled sugar cane; for long stretches it was not possible to see five yards, and the dew in the early mornings was so heavy that after a hundred yards of such going one was drenched to the skin.

We were forced into the more open parts—the higher, stonier, more barren ground where just then the bigger game was by no means plentiful.

After two hours of this we struck a stream, and there we made somewhat better pace and less noise, often taking to the bed of the creek for easier going. There, too, we found plenty of drinking places and plenty of fresh spoor of the bigger game, and as the hills began to rise in view above the bush and trees, we found what Francis was looking for. Something caught his eye on the far side of the stream, and he waded in. I followed and when half way through saw the contented look on his face and caught his words: “Buffalo! I thought so!”

We sat down then to think it out. The spoor told of a troop of a dozen to sixteen animals—bulls, cows, and calves; and it was that morning’s spoor: even in the soft moist ground at the stream’s edge the water had not yet oozed into most of the prints. Fortunately there was a light breeze from the hills, and as it seemed probable that in any case they would make that way for the hot part of the day, we decided to follow for some distance on the track and then make for the likeliest poort in the hills.

The buffalo had come up from the low country in the night on a course striking the creek diagonally at the drinking place; their departing spoor went off at a slight tangent from the stream—the two trails making a very wide angle at the drinking place and confirming the idea that after their night’s feed in the rich grass lower down they were making for the hills again in the morning and had touched at the stream to drink.

Jock seemed to gather from our whispered conversa-

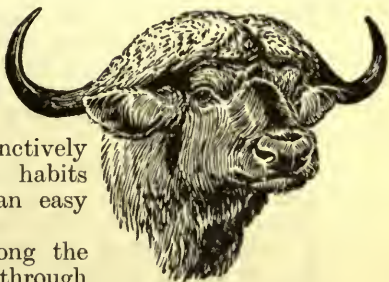
tion and silent movements that there was work to hand, and his eyes moved from one face to the other as we talked, much as a child watches the faces in a conversation it cannot quite follow. When we got up and began to move along the trail, he gave one of his little sideways bounds, as if he half thought of throwing a somersault and restrained himself; and then with several approving waggings of his tail settled down at once to business.

Jock went in front: it was best so, and quite safe, for, whilst certain to spot anything long before we could, there was not the least risk of his rushing it or making any noise. The slightest whisper of a "Hst" from me would have brought him to a breathless standstill at any moment; but even this was not likely to be needed, for he kept as close a watch on my face as I did on him.

There was, of course, no difficulty whatever in following the spoor; the animals were as big as cattle, and their trail through the rank grass was as plain as a road: our difficulty was to get near enough to see them without being heard. Under the down-trodden grass there were plenty of dry sticks to step on, any of which would have been as fatal to our chances as a pistol shot, and even the unavoidable rustle of the grass might betray us while the buffalo themselves remained hidden. Thus our progress was very slow, a particularly troublesome impediment being the grass stems thrown down across the trail by the animals crossing and re-crossing each others' spoor and stopping to crop a mouthful here and there or perhaps to play. The tambookie grass in these parts has a stem thicker than a lead pencil, more like young bamboo than grass; and these stems thrown cross-ways by storms or game make an entanglement through which the foot cannot be forced: it means high stepping all the time.

We expected to follow the spoor for several miles before coming on the buffalo—probably right into the kloof towards which it appeared to lead—but were

nevertheless quite prepared to drop on to them at any moment, knowing well how game will loiter on their way when undisturbed and vary their time and course, instinctively avoiding the too regular habits which would make them an easy prey.



Jock moved steadily along the trodden track, sliding easily through the grass or jumping softly and noiselessly over impediments, and we followed, looking ahead as far as the winding course of the trail permitted.

To right and left of us stood the screen of tall grass, bush and trees. Once Jock stopped, throwing up his nose, and stood for some seconds while we held our breath; but having satisfied himself that there was nothing of immediate consequence, he moved on again—rather more slowly, as it appeared to us. I looked at Francis's face; it was pale and set like marble, and his watchful grey eyes were large and wide like an antelope's, as though opened out to take in everything; and those moments of intense interest and expectation were the best part of a memorable day.

There was something near: we felt it! Jock was going more carefully than ever, with his head up most of the time; and the feeling of expectation grew stronger and stronger until it amounted to absolute certainty. Then Jock stopped, stopped in mid-stride, not with his nose up ranging for scent, but with head erect, ears cocked, and tail poised—dead still: he was looking at something.

We had reached the end of the grass where the bush and rees of the mountain slope had choked it out, and before us there was fairly thick bush mottled with black shadows and patches of bright sunlight in which it was most difficult to see anything. There we stood like statues, the dog in front with the two men abreast

behind him, and all peering intently. Twice Jock slowly turned his head and looked into my eyes, and I felt keenly the sense of hopeless inferiority. "There it is, what are you going to do?" was what the first look seemed to say; and the second: "Well, what are you waiting for?"

How long we stood thus it is not possible to say: time is no measure of such things, and to me it seemed unending suspense; but we stood our ground scarcely breathing, knowing that something was there, because he saw it and told us so, and knowing that as soon as we moved it would be gone. Then close to the ground there was a movement—something swung, and the full picture flashed upon us. It was a buffalo calf standing in the shade of a big bush with its back towards us, and it was the swishing of the tail that had betrayed it. We dared not breathe a word or pass a look—a face turned might have caught some glint of light and shown us up; so we stood like statues each knowing that the other was looking for the herd and would fire when he got a chance at one of the full-grown animals.

My eyes were strained and burning from the intensity of the effort to see; but except the calf I could not make out a living thing: the glare of the yellow grass in which we stood, and the sun-splotched darkness beyond it beat me.

At last, in the corner of my eye, I saw Francis's rifle rise, as slowly—almost—as the mercury in a warmed thermometer. There was a long pause, and then came the shot and wild snorts of alarm and rage. A dozen huge black forms started into life for a second and as quickly vanished—scattering and crashing through the jungle.

The first clear impression was that of Jock, who after one swift run forward for a few yards stood ready to spring off in pursuit, looking back at me and waiting for the word to go; but at the sign of my raised hand, opened with palm towards him, he subsided

slowly and lay down flat with his head resting on his paws.

"Did you see?" asked Francis.

"Not till you fired. I heard it strike. What was it?"

"Hanged if I know! I heard it too. It was one of the big uns; but bull or cow I don't know."

"Where did you get it?"

"Well, I couldn't make out more than a black patch in the bush. It moved once, but I couldn't see how it was standing—end on or across. It may be hit anywhere. I took for the middle of the patch and let drive. Bit risky, eh?"

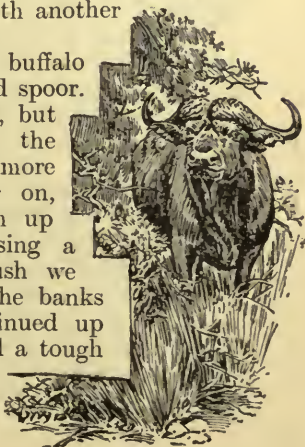
"Seems like taking chances."

"Well, it was no use waiting: we came for this!" and then he added with a careless laugh, "They always clear from the first shot if you get 'em at close quarters, but the fun'll begin now. Expect he'll lay for us in the track somewhere."

That is the way of the wounded buffalo—we all knew that; and old Rocky's advice came to mind with a good deal of point: "Keep cool and shoot straight—or stay right home"; and Jock's expectant watchful look smote me with another memory—"It was my dawg!"

A few yards from where the buffalo had stood we picked up the blood spoor. There was not very much of it, but we saw from the marks on the bushes here and there, and more distinctly on some grass further on, that the wound was pretty high up and on the right side. Crossing a small stretch of more open bush we reached the dense growth along the banks of the stream, and as this continued up into the kloof it was clear we had a tough job before us.

Animals when badly wounded



nearly always leave the herd, and very often go down wind so as to be able to scent and avoid their pursuers. This fellow had followed the herd up wind, and that rather puzzled us.

A wounded buffalo in thick bush is considered to be about as nasty a customer as any one may desire to tackle; for, its vindictive indomitable courage and extraordinary cunning are a very formidable combination, as a long list of fatalities bears witness. Its favourite device—so old hunters will tell you—is to make off down wind when hit, and after going for some distance, come back again in a semicircle to intersect its own spoor, and there under good cover lie in wait for those who may follow up.

This makes the sport quite as interesting as need be, for the chances are more nearly even than they generally are in hunting. The buffalo chooses the ground that suits its purpose of ambushing its enemy, and naturally selects a spot where concealment is possible; but, making every allowance for this, it seems little short of a miracle that the huge black beast is able to hide itself so effectually that it can charge from a distance of a dozen yards on to those who are searching for it.

The secret of it seems to lie in two things: first, absolute stillness; and second, breaking up the colour. No wild animal, except those protected by distance and open country, will stand against a background of light or of uniform colour, nor will it as a rule allow its own shape to form an unbroken patch against its chosen background.

They work on Nature's lines. Look at the ostrich—the cock, black and handsome, so strikingly different from the commonplace grey hen! Considering that for periods of six weeks at a stretch they are anchored to one spot hatching the eggs, turn and turn about, it seems that one or other must be an easy victim for the beast of prey, since the same background cannot possibly suit both. But they know that too; so the

grey hen sits by day, and the black cock by night! And the ostrich is not the fool it is thought to be—burying its head in the sand! Knowing how the long stem of a neck will catch the eye, it lays it flat on the ground, as other birds do, when danger threatens the nest or brood, and concealment is better than flight. That tame chicks will do this in a bare paddock is only a laughable assertion of instinct.



Look at the zebra! There is nothing more striking, nothing that arrests the eye more sharply—in the Zoo—than this vivid contrast of colour; yet in the bush the wavy stripes of black and white are a protection, enabling him to hide at will.

I have seen a wildebeeste effectually hidden by a single blighted branch; a koodoo bull, by a few twisty sticks; a crouching lion, by a wisp of feathery grass no higher than one's knee, no bigger than a vase of flowers! Yet, the marvel of it is always fresh.

After a couple of hundred yards of that sort of going, we changed our plan, taking to the creek again and making occasional cross-cuts to the trail, to be sure he was still ahead. It was certain then that the buffalo was following the herd and making for the poort, and as he had not stopped once on our account we took to the creek after the fourth cross-cut and made what pace we could to reach the narrow gorge where we reckoned to pick up the spoor again.

There are, however, few short cuts—and no certainties—in hunting; when we reached the poort there was no trace to be found of the wounded buffalo; the rest of the herd had passed in, but we failed to find blood or other trace of the wounded one, and Jock was clearly as much at fault as we were.

We had overshot the mark and there was nothing for it but to hark back to the last blood spoor and, by following it up, find out what had happened. This



took over an hour, for we spoorred him then with the utmost caution, being convinced that the buffalo, if not dead, was badly wounded and lying in wait for us.

We came on his 'stand,' in a well-chosen spot, where the game path took a sharp turn round some heavy bushes. The buffalo had stood, not where one would naturally expect it—in the dense cover which seemed just suited for his purpose—but among lighter bush on the *opposite* side and about twenty yards nearer to us. There was no room for doubt about his hostile intentions; and when we recalled how we had instantly picked out the thick bush on the left—to the exclusion of everything else—as the spot to be watched, his selection of more open ground on the other side, and nearer to us, seemed so fiendishly clever that it made one feel cold and creepy. One hesitates to say it was deliberately planned; yet—plan, instinct, or accident—there was the fact.

The marks showed us he was badly hit; but there was no limb broken, and no doubt he was good for some hours yet. We followed along the spoor, more cautiously than ever; and when we reached the sharp turn beyond the thick bush we found that the path was only a few yards from the stream, so that on our way up the bed of the creek we had passed within twenty yards of where the buffalo was waiting for us. No doubt he had heard us then as we walked past, and had winded us later on when we got ahead of him into the poort.

What had he made of it? What had he done? Had he followed up to attack us? Was he waiting somewhere near? Or had he broken away into the bush on finding himself headed off? These were some of the questions we asked ourselves as we crept along.

Well! what he had done did not answer our ques-

tions. On reaching the poort again we found his spoor, freshly made since we had been there, and he had walked right along through the gorge without stopping again, and gone into the kloof beyond. Whether he had followed us up when we got ahead of him—hoping to stalk us from behind; or had gone ahead, expecting to meet us coming down wind to look for him; or, when he heard us pass down stream again—and, it may be, thought we had given up pursuit—had simply walked on after the herd, were questions never answered.

A breeze had risen since morning, and as we approached the hills it grew stronger: in the poort itself it was far too strong for our purpose—the wind coming through the narrow opening like a forced draught. The herd would not stand there, and it was not probable that the wounded animal would stop until he joined the others or reached a more sheltered place. We were keen on the chase, and as he had about an hour's start of us and it was already midday, there was no time to waste.

Game paths were numerous and very irregular, and the place was a perfect jungle of trees, bush, bramble and the tallest rankest grass. I have ridden in that valley many times since then through grass standing several feet above my head. It was desperately hard work, but we did want to get the buffalo; and although the place was full of game and we put up koodoo, wildebeeste, rietbuck, bushbuck, and duiker, we held to the wounded buffalo's spoor, neglecting all else.

Just before ascending the terrace we had heard the curious far-travelling sound of kaffirs' calling to each other from a distance, but, except for a passing comment, paid no heed to it and passed on; later we heard it again and again, and at last, when we happened to pause in a more open portion of the bush after we had gone half way along the terrace, the calling became so frequent and came from so many quarters that we stopped to take note. Francis, who spoke Zulu like

one of themselves, at last made out a word or two which gave the clue.

"They're after the wounded buffalo!" he said. "Come on, man, before they get their dogs, or we'll never see him again."

Knowing then that the buffalo was a long way ahead, we scrambled on as fast as we could whilst holding to his track; but it was very hot and very rough and, to add to our troubles, smoke from a grass fire came driving into our faces.

"Niggers burning on the slopes; confound them!" Francis growled.

They habitually fire the grass in patches during the summer and autumn, as soon as it is dry enough to burn, in order to get young grass for the winter or the early spring, and although the smoke worried us there did not seem to be anything unusual about the fire. But ten minutes later we stopped again; the smoke was perceptibly thicker; birds were flying past us down wind, with numbers of locusts and other insects; two or three times we heard buck and other animals break back; and all were going the same way. Then the same thought struck us both—it was stamped in our faces: this was no ordinary mountain grass fire; it was the bush.

Francis was a quiet fellow, one of the sort it is well not to rouse. His grave is in the Bushveld where his unbeaten record among intrepid lion-hunters was made, and where he fell in the war, leaving another and greater record to his name. The blood rose slowly to his face, until it was brickly red, and he looked an ugly customer as he said:

"The black brutes have fired the valley to burn him out. Come on quick. We must get out of this on to the slopes!"

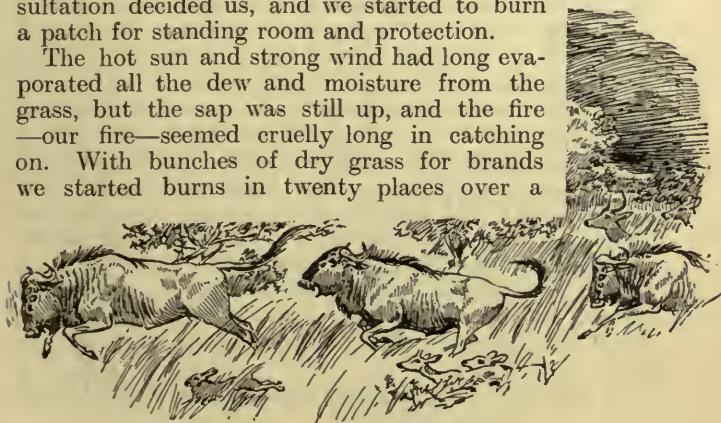
We did not know then that there were no slopes—only a precipitous face of rock with dense jungle to the foot of it; and after we had spent a quarter of an hour in that effort, we found our way blocked by

the krans and a tangle of undergrowth much worse than that in the middle of the terrace. The noise made by the wind in the trees and our struggling through the grass and bush had prevented our hearing the fire at first, but now its ever growing roar drowned all sounds. Ordinarily, there would have been no real difficulty in avoiding a bush fire; but, pinned in between the river and the precipice and with miles of dense bush behind us, it was not at all pleasant.

Had we turned back even then and made for the poort it is possible we might have travelled faster than the fire, but it would have been rough work indeed; moreover, that would have been going back—and we did want to get the buffalo—so we decided to make one more try, towards the river this time. It was not much of a try, however, and we had gone no further than the middle of the terrace again when it became alarmingly clear that this fire meant business.

The wind increased greatly, as it always does once a bush fire gets a start; the air was thick with smoke, and full of flying things; in the bush and grass about us there was a constant scurrying; the terror of stampede was in the very atmosphere. A few words of consultation decided us, and we started to burn a patch for standing room and protection.

The hot sun and strong wind had long evaporated all the dew and moisture from the grass, but the sap was still up, and the fire—our fire—seemed cruelly long in catching on. With bunches of dry grass for brands we started burns in twenty places over a



length of a hundred yards, and each little flame licked up, spread a little, and then hesitated or died out: it seemed as if ours would never take, while the other came on with roars and leaps, sweeping clouds of sparks and ash over us in the dense rolling mass of smoke.

At last a fierce rush of wind struck down on us, and in a few seconds each little flame became a living demon of destruction; another minute, and the stretch before us was a field of swaying flame. There was a sudden roar and crackle, as of musketry, and the whole mass seemed lifted into the air in one blazing sheet: it simply leaped into life and swept everything before it.

When we opened our scorched eyes the ground in front of us was all black, with only here and there odd lights and torches dotted about—like tapers on a pall; and on ahead, beyond the trellis work of bare scorched trees, the wall of flame swept on.

Then down on the wings of the wind came the other fire; and before it fled every living thing. Heaven only knows what passed us in those few minutes when a broken stream of terrified creatures dashed by, hardly swerving to avoid us. There is no coherent picture left of that scene—just a medley of impressions linked up by flashes of unforgettable vividness. A herd of koodoo came crashing by; I know there was a herd, but only the first and last will come to mind—the space between seems blurred. The clear impressions are of the koodoo bull in front, with nose out-thrust, eyes shut against the bush, and great horns laid back upon the withers, as he swept along opening the way for his herd; and then, as they vanished, the big ears, ewe neck, and tilting hindquarters of the last cow—between them nothing but a mass of moving grey!

The wildebeeste went by in Indian file, uniform in shape, colour and horns; and strangely uniform in their mechanical action, lowered heads, and fiercely determined rush.

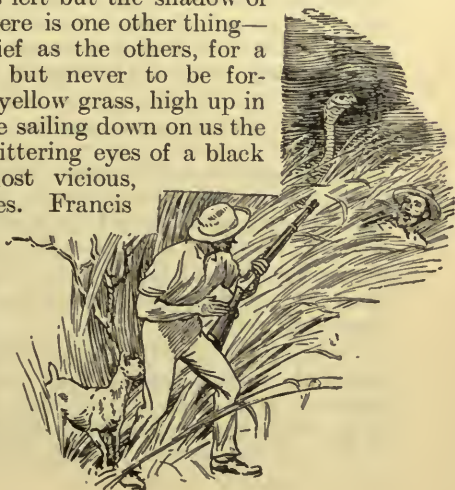
A rietbuck ram stopped close to us, looked back

wide-eyed and anxious, and whistled shrilly, and then cantered on with head erect and white tail flapping; but its mate neither answered nor came by. A terrified hare with its ears laid flat scuttled past within a yard of Francis and did not seem to see him. Above us scared birds swept or fluttered down wind; while others again came up swirling and swinging about, darting boldly through the smoke to catch the insects driven before the fire.

But what comes back with the suggestion of infinitely pathetic helplessness is the picture of a beetle. We stood on the edge of our burn, waiting for the ground to cool, and at my feet a pair of tock-tockie beetles, hump backed and bandy legged, came toiling slowly and earnestly along; they reached the edge of our burn, touched the warm ash, and turned patiently aside—to walk round it!

A school of chattering monkeys raced out on to the blackened flat, and screamed shrilly with terror as the hot earth and cinders burnt their feet.

Porcupine, antbear, meerkat! They are vague, so vague that nothing is left but the shadow of their passing; but there is one other thing—seen in a flash as brief as the others, for a second or two only, but never to be forgotten! Out of the yellow grass, high up in the waving tops, came sailing down on us the swaying head and glittering eyes of a black mamba—swiftest, most vicious, most deadly of snakes. Francis and I were not five yards apart and it passed between us, giving a quick chilly beady look at each—pitiless, and hateful—and one hiss as the slithering tongue shot out: that was all, and



it sailed past with strange effortless movement. How much of the body was on the ground propelling it, I cannot even guess ; but we had to look upwards to see the head as the snake passed between us.

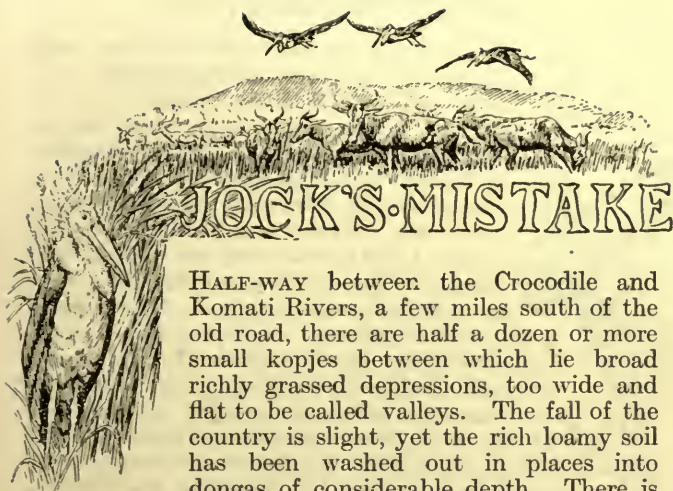
The scorching breath of the fire drove us before it on to the baked ground, inches deep in ashes and glowing cinders, where we kept marking time to ease our blistering feet ; our hats were pulled down to screen our necks as we stood with our backs to the coming flames ; our flannel shirts were so hot that we kept shifting our shoulders for relief. Jock, who had no screen and whose feet had no protection, was in my arms ; and we strove to shield ourselves from the furnace-blast with the branches we had used to beat out the fire round the big tree which was our main shelter.

The heat was awful ! Live brands were flying past all the time, and some struck us ; myriads of sparks fell round and on us, burning numberless small holes in our clothing, and dotting blisters on our backs ; great sheets of flame leaped out from the driving glare, and, detached by many yards from their source, were visible for quite a space in front of us. Then, just at its maddest and fiercest, there came a gasp and sob, and the fire devil died behind us as it reached the black bare ground. Our burn divided it as an island splits the flood, and it swept along our flanks in two great walls of living leaping roaring flame.

Two hundred yards away there was a bare yellow place in a world of inky black, and to that haven we ran. It was strange to look about and see the naked country all round us, where but a few minutes earlier the tall grass had shut us in ; but the big bare antheap was untouched, and there we flung ourselves down, utterly done.

Faint from heat and exhaustion—scorched and blistered, face and arms, back and feet ; weary and footsore, and with boots burnt through—we reached camp long after dark, glad to be alive.

We had forgotten the wounded buffalo ; he seemed part of another life !



JOCK'S MISTAKE

HALF-WAY between the Crocodile and Komati Rivers, a few miles south of the old road, there are half a dozen or more small kopjes between which lie broad richly grassed depressions, too wide and flat to be called valleys. The fall of the country is slight, yet the rich loamy soil has been washed out in places into dongas of considerable depth. There is no running water there in winter, but there are a few big pools—long narrow irregularly shaped bits of water—with shady trees around them.

I came upon the place by accident one day, and thereafter we kept it dark as our own preserve; for it was full of game, and a most delightful spot.

Apart from the discovery of this preserve, the day was memorable for the reason that it was my first experience of a big mixed herd; and I learned that day how difficult the work may be when several kinds of game run together. After a dry and warm morning the sight of the big pool had prompted an off-saddle; Snowball was tethered in a patch of good grass, and Jock and I were lying in the shade.

When he began to sniff and walk up wind I took the rifle and followed, and only a little way off we came into dry vlei ground where there were few trees and the grass stood about waist high. Some two hundred yards away where the ground rose slightly and the bush became thicker there was a fair sized troop of impala, perhaps a hundred or more, and just behind,



and mostly to one side of them, were between twenty and thirty tsessebe. We saw them clearly and in time to avoid exposing ourselves: they were neither feeding nor resting, but simply standing about, and individual animals were moving unconcernedly from time to time with an air of idle loitering. I tried to pick out a good tsessebe ram, but the impala were in the way, and it was necessary to crawl for some distance to reach certain cover away on the right.

Crawling is hard work and very rough on both hands and knees in the Bushveld, frequent rests being necessary; and in one of the pauses I heard a curious sound of soft padded feet jumping behind me, and looking quickly about caught Jock in the act of taking his observations. The grass was too high for him to see over, even when he stood up on his hind legs, and he was giving jumps of slowly increasing strength to get the height which would enable him to see what was on. I shall never forget that first view of Jock's ballooning observations; it became a regular practice afterwards and I grew accustomed to seeing him stand on his hind legs or jump when his view was shut out—indeed sometimes when we were having a slow time I used to draw him by pretending to stalk something; but it is that first view that remains a picture of him. I turned at the instant when he was at the top of his jump; his legs were all bunched up, his eyes staring eagerly and his ears had flapped out, giving him a look of comic astonishment. It was a most surprisingly unreal sight: he looked like a caricature of Jock shot into the air by a galvanic shock. A sign with my hand brought him flat on the ground, looking distinctly guilty, and we moved along again; but I was shaking with silent laughter.

At the next stop I had a look back to see how he

was behaving, and to my surprise, although he was following carefully close behind me, he was looking steadily away to our immediate right. I subsided gently on to my left side to see what it was that interested him, and to my delight saw a troop of twenty to twenty-five Blue Wildebeeste. They, too, were 'standing any way,' and evidently had not seen us.

I worked myself cautiously round to face them so as to be able to pick my shot and take it kneeling, thus clearing the tops of the grass; but whilst doing this another surprising development took place. Looking hard and carefully at the wildebeeste two hundred yards away, I became conscious of something else in between us, and only half the distance off, looking at me. It had the effect of a shock; the disagreeable effect produced by having a book or picture suddenly thrust close to the face; the feeling of wanting to get further away from it to re-focus one's sight.

What I saw was simply a dozen quagga, all exactly alike, all standing alike, all looking at me, all full face to me, their fore feet together, their ears cocked, and their heads quite motionless—all gazing steadily at me, alive with interest and curiosity. There was something quite ludicrous in it, and something perplexing also: when I looked at the quagga the wildebeeste seemed to get out of focus and were lost to me; when I looked at the wildebeeste the quagga 'blurred' and faded out of sight. The difference in distance, perhaps as much as the very marked difference in the distinctive colourings, threw me out; and the effect of being watched also told. Of course I wanted to get a wildebeeste, but I was conscious of the watching quagga all the time, and, for the life of me, could not help constantly looking at





them to see if they were going to start off and stampede the others.

Whilst trying to pick out the best of the wildebeeste a movement away on the left made me look that way: the impala jumped off like one animal, scaring the tsessebe into a scattering rout; the quagga switched round and thundered off like a stampede of horses; and the wildebeeste simply vanished.

One signal in one troop had sent the whole lot off. Jock and I were left alone, still crouching, looking from side to side, staring at the slowly drifting dust, and listening to the distant dying sound of galloping feet.

I started off early next morning with the boys to bring in the meat, and went on foot, giving Snowball a rest, more or less deserved. By nine o'clock the boys were on their way back, and leaving them to take the direct route I struck away eastwards along the line of the pools, not expecting much and least of all dreaming that fate had one of the worst days in store for us: "From cloudless heavens her lightnings glance" did not occur to my mind as we moved silently along in the bright sunshine.

We passed the second pool, loitering a few minutes in the cool shade of the evergreens to watch the green pigeons feeding on the wild figs and peering down curiously at us; then moved briskly into more open ground. It is not wise to step too suddenly out of the dark shade into strong glare, and it may have been that act of carelessness that enabled the koodoo to get off before I saw them. They cantered away in a string with the cows in the rear, between me and two full grown bulls. It was a running shot—end on—and the last of the troop, a big cow, gave a stumble; but catching herself up again she cantered off slowly. Her body was all bunched up and she was pitching greatly, and her hind legs kept flying out in irregular kicks,

much as you may see a horse kick out when a blind fly is biting him.

There was no time for a second shot and we started off in hot pursuit; and fifty yards further on where there was a clear view I saw that the koodoo was going no faster than an easy canter, and Jock was close behind.

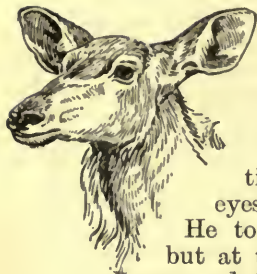
Whether he was misled by the curious action, and believed there was a broken leg to grip, or was simply over bold, it is impossible to know. Whatever the reason, he jumped for one of the hind legs, and at the same moment the koodoo lashed out viciously. One foot struck him under the jaw close to the throat, 'whipped' his head and neck back like a bent switch, and hurled him somersaulting backwards.

I have the impression—as one sees oneself in a nightmare—of a person throwing up his arms and calling the name of his child as a train passed over it.

Jock lay limp and motionless, with the blood oozing from mouth, nose, and eyes. I recollect feeling for his heart-beat and breath, and shaking him roughly and calling him by name; then, remembering the pool near by, I left him in the shade of a tree, filled my hat with water, ran back again and poured it over him and into his mouth, shaking him again to rouse him, and several times pressing his sides—bellows fashion—in a ridiculous effort to restore breathing.

The old hat was leaky and I had to grip the rough-cut ventila-





tions to make it hold any water at all, and I was returning with a second supply when with a great big heart-jump, I saw Jock heel over from his side and with his forelegs flat on the ground raise himself to a resting position, his head wagging groggily and his eyes blinking in a very dazed way.

He took no notice when I called his name, but at the touch of my hand his ears moved up and the stumpy tail scraped feebly in the dead leaves. He was stone deaf; but I did not know it then. He lapped a little of the water, sneezed the blood away and licked his chops; and then, with evident effort, stood up.

But this is the picture which it is impossible to forget. The dog was still so dazed and shaken that he reeled slightly, steadying himself by spreading his legs well apart, and there followed a few seconds' pause in which he stood thus; and then he began to walk forward with the uncertain staggers of a toddling child. His jaws were set close; his eyes were beady black, and he looked 'fight' all over. He took no notice of me; and I, never dreaming that he was after the koodoo, watched the walk quicken to a laboured trot before I moved or called; but he paid no heed to the call. For the first time in his life there was rank open defiance of orders, and he trotted slowly along with his nose to the ground. Then I understood; and, thinking he was maddened by the kick and not quite responsible for himself, and—more than that—admiring his pluck far too much to be angry, I ran to bring him back; but at a turn in his course he saw me coming, and this time he obeyed the call and signal instantly, and with a limp air of disappointment followed quietly back to the tree.

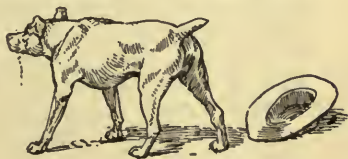
The reason for Jock's persistent disobedience that day was not even suspected then; I put everything down to the kick; and he seemed to me to be 'all

wrong,' but indeed there was excuse enough for him. Nevertheless it was puzzling that at times he should ignore me in positively contemptuous fashion, and at others obey with all his old readiness : I neither knew he was deaf, nor realised that the habit of using certain signs and gestures when I spoke to him—and even of using them in place of orders when silence was imperative—had made him almost independent of the word of mouth. From that day he depended wholly upon signs ; for he never heard another sound.

Joek came back with me and lay down ; but he was not content. Presently he rose again and remained standing with his back to me, looking steadily in the direction taken by the koodoo. It was fine to see the indomitable spirit, but I did not mean to let him try again ; the koodoo was as good as dead no doubt, yet a hundred koodoo would not have tempted me to risk taking him out : to rest him and get him back to the camp was the only thought. I was feeling very soft about the dog then. And while I sat thus watching him and waiting for him to rest and recover, once more and almost within reach of me he started off again. But it was not as he had done before : this time he went with a spring and a rush, and with head lowered and meaning business. In vain I called and followed : he outpaced me and left me in a few strides.

The koodoo had gone along the right bank of the donga which, commencing just below the pool, extended half a mile or more down the flat valley. Joek's rush was magnificent, but it was puzzling, and his direction was even more so ; for he made straight for the donga.

I ran back for the rifle and followed, and he had already disappeared down the steep bank of the donga when, through the trees on the opposite side, I saw a koodoo cow moving along at a slow cramped walk.



The donga was a deep one with perpendicular sides, and in places even overhanging crumbling banks, and I reached it as Jock, slipping and struggling, worked his way up the other wall writhing and climbing through the tree roots exposed by the floods. As he rushed out the koodoo saw him and turned; there was just a chance—a second of time: a foot of space—before he got in the line of fire; and I took it. One hind leg gave way, and in the short sidelong stagger that followed Jock jumped at the koodoo's throat and they went down together.

It took me several minutes to get through the donga, and by that time the koodoo was dead and Jock was standing, wide-mouthed and panting, on guard at its head: the second shot had been enough.

It was an unexpected and puzzling end; and, in a way, not a welcome one, as it meant delay in getting back. After the morning's experience there was not much inclination for the skinning and cutting up of a big animal and I set to work gathering branches and grass to hide the carcase, meaning to send the boys back for it.

But the day's experiences were not over yet: a low growl from Jock made me look sharply round, to see half a dozen kaffirs coming through the bush with a string of mongrel hounds at their heels.

So that was the explanation of the koodoo's return to us! The natives, a hunting party, had heard the shot and coming along in hopes of meat had met and headed off the wounded koodoo, turning her back almost on her own tracks. There was satisfaction in having the puzzle solved, but the more practical point was that here was all the help I wanted; and the boys readily agreed to skin the animal and carry the four quarters to the camp for the gift of the rest.

Then my trouble began with Jock. He flew at the first of the kaffir dogs that sneaked up to sniff at the koodoo. Shouting at him produced no effect whatever, and before I could get hold of him he had mauled

the animal pretty badly. After hauling him off I sat down in the shade, with him beside me; but there were many dogs, and a succession of affairs, and I, knowing nothing of his deafness, became thoroughly exasperated and surprised by poor old Jock's behaviour.

His instinct to defend our kills, which was always strong, was roused that day beyond control, and his hatred of kaffir dogs—an implacable one in any case—made a perfect fury of him; still, the sickening awful feeling that came over me as he lay limp and lifeless was too fresh, and it was not possible to be really angry; and after half a dozen of the dogs had been badly handled there was something so comical in the way they sheered off and eyed Jock that I could only laugh. They sneaked behind bushes and tried to circumvent him in all sorts of ways, but fled precipitately as soon as he moved a step or lowered his head and humped his shoulders threateningly. Even the kaffir owners, who had begun to look glum, broke into appreciative laughter and shouts of admiration for the white man's dog.

Jock kept up an unbroken string of growls, not loud, of course, but I could feel them going all the while like a volcano's rumbling as my restraining hand rested on him, and when the boys came up to skin the koodoo I had to hold him down and shake him sharply. The dog was mad with fight; he bristled all over; and no patting or talking produced more than a flicker of his ears. The growling went on; the hair stood up; the tail was quite unresponsive; his jaws were set like a vice; and his eyes shone like two black diamonds. He had actually struggled to get free of my hand when the boys began to skin, and they were so scared by his resolute attempt that they would not start until I put him down between my knees and held him.

I was sitting against a tree only three or four yards from the koodoo, and the boys, who had lighted a fire in anticipation of early tit-bits which would grill

while they worked, were getting along well with the skinning, when one of them saw fit to pause in order to hold forth in the native fashion on the glories of the chase and the might of the white man. Jock's head lay on his paws and his mouth was shut like a rat-trap; his growling grew louder as the bombastic nigger, all unconscious of the wicked watching eyes behind him, waved his blood-stained knife and warmed to his theme.

"Great you thought yourself," proclaimed the orator, addressing the dead koodoo in a long rigmarole which was only partly understood by me but evidently much approved by the other boys as they stooped to their work. "Swift of foot and strong of limb. But the white man came, and—there!" I could not make out the words with any certainty; but whatever the last word was, it was intended as a dramatic climax, and to lend additional force to his point the orator let fly a resounding kick on the koodoo's stomach.

The effect was quite electrical! Like an arrow from the bow Jock flew at him! The warning shout came too late, and as Jock's teeth fastened in him behind the terrified boy gave a wild bound over the koodoo, carrying Jock like a streaming coat-tail behind him.

The work was stopped and the natives drew off in grave consultation. I thought that they had had enough of Jock for one day and that they would strike



work and leave me, probably returning later on to steal the meat while I went for help from the waggons. But it turned out that the consultation was purely medical, and in a few minutes I had an interesting exhibition of native doctoring. They laid the late orator out face downwards, and one burly 'brother' straddled him across the small of the back; then after a little preliminary examination of the four slits left by Jock's fangs, he proceeded to cauterise them with the glowing ends of sundry sticks which an assistant took from the fire and handed to him as required. The victim flapped his hands on the ground and hallooed out "My babo! My babo!" but he did not struggle; and the operator toasted away with methodical indifference.

The orator stood it well!

I took Jock away to the big tree near the pool: it was evident that he, too, had had enough of it for one day.

There was a spot between the Komati and Crocodile Rivers on the north side of the road where the white man seldom passed and Nature was undisturbed; few knew of water there; it was too well concealed between deep banks and the dense growth of thorns and large trees.

The spot always had great attractions for me apart from the big game to be found there. I used to steal along the banks of this lone water and watch the smaller life of the bush. It was a delightful field for naturalist and artist, but unfortunately we thought little of such things, and knew even less; and now nothing is left from all the glorious opportunities but the memory of an endless fascination and a few facts that touch the human chord and will not submit to be forgotten.

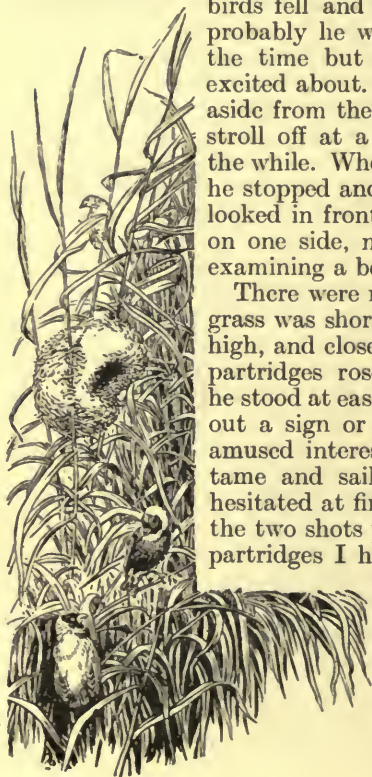
There were plenty of birds—guinea-fowl, pheasant,



partridge, knoorhaan and bush paww. Jock accompanied me of course when I took the fowling-piece, but merely for companionship; for there was no need for him on these occasions. I shot birds to get a change of food and trusted to walking them up along the river banks and near drinking pools; but one evening Jock came forward of his own accord to help me—a sort of amused volunteer; and after that I always used him.

He had been at my heels, apparently taking little interest in the proceedings from the moment the first birds fell and he saw what the game was; probably he was intelligently interested all the time but considered it nothing to get excited about. After a time I saw him turn aside from the line we had been taking and stroll off at a walking pace, sniffing softly the while. When he had gone a dozen yards he stopped and looked back at me; then he looked in front again with his head slightly on one side, much as he would have done examining a beetle rolling his ball.

There were no signs of anything, yet the grass was short for those parts, scarce a foot high, and close, soft and curly. A brace of partridges rose a few feet from Jock, and he stood at ease calmly watching them, without a sign or move to indicate more than amused interest. The birds were absurdly tame and sailed so quietly along that I hesitated at first to shoot; then the noise of the two shots put up the largest number of partridges I have ever seen in one lot, and a line of birds rose for perhaps sixty yards across our front. There was no wild whirr and confusion: they rose in leisurely fashion as if told to move on, sailing in-



finitely slowly down the slope to the thorns near the donga. Running my eye along the line I counted them in twos up to between thirty and forty; and that could not have been more than half. How many coveys had packed there, and for what purpose, and whether they came every evening, were questions which one would like answered now; but they were not of sufficient interest then to encourage a second visit another evening. The birds sailed quietly into the little wood, and many of them alighted on branches of the larger trees. It is the only time I have seen a partridge in a tree; but when one comes to think it out, it seems common-sense that, in a country teeming with vermin and night-prowlers, all birds should sleep off the ground. Perhaps they do!



There were numbers of little squirrel-like creatures there too. Our fellows used to call them ground-squirrels and "tree-rats"; because they live underground, yet climb trees readily in search of food; they were little fellows like meerkats, with bushy tails ringed in brown, black and white, of which the waggon boys made decorations for their slouch hats.

Jock wanted a go at them: they did not appear quite so much beneath notice as the birds.

Along the water's edge one came on the lagavaans, huge repulsive water-lizards three to four feet long, like crocodiles in miniature, sunning themselves in some favourite spot in the margin of the reeds or on the edge of the bank; they give one the jumps by the suddenness of their rush through the reeds and plunge into deep water.

There were otters too, big black-brown fierce fellows, to be seen swimming silently close under the banks. I got a couple of them, but was always nervous of letting Jock into the water after things, as one never



knew where the crocodile lurked. He got an ugly bite from one old dog-otter which I shot in shallow water; and, mortally wounded as he was, the otter put up a rare good fight before Jock finally hauled him out.

Then there were the cane-rats, considered by some most excellent and delicate of meats, as big and tender as small sucking-pigs. The cane-rat, living and dead, was one of the stock surprises, and the subject of jokes and tricks upon the unsuspecting: there seems to be no sort of ground for associating the extraordinary fat thing, gliding among the reeds or swimming silently under the banks, with either its live capacity of rat or its more attractive dead rôle of roast sucking-pig.

The hardened ones enjoyed setting this treat before the hungry and unsuspecting, and, after a hearty meal, announcing—"That was roast rat: good, isn't it?" The memory of one experience gives me water in the gills now! It was unpleasant, but not equal to the nausea and upheaval which supervened when, after a very savoury stew of delicate white meat, we were shown the fresh skin of a monkey hanging from the end of the buck-rails, with the head drooping forward, eyes closed, arms dangling lifeless, and limp open hands—a ghastly caricature of some hanged human, shrivelled and shrunk within its clothes of skin. I felt like a cannibal.

The water tortoises in the silent pools, grotesque muddy fellows, were full of interest to the quiet watcher, and better that way than as the "turtle soup" which once or twice we ventured on and tried to think was good!

There were certain hours of the day when it was more pleasant and profitable to lie in the shade and rest. It is the time of rest for the Bushveld—that spell about middle-day; and yet if one remains quiet, there is generally something to see and something

worth watching. There were the insects on the ground about one which would not otherwise be seen at all ; there were caterpillars clad in spiky armour made of tiny fragments of grass—fair defence no doubt against some enemies and a most marvellous disguise ; other caterpillars clad in bark, impossible to detect until they moved ; there were grasshoppers like leaves, and irregularly shaped stick insects, with legs as bulky as the body, and all jointed by knots like irregular twigs—wonderful mimetic creatures.



Jock often found these things for me. Something would move and interest him ; and when I saw him stand up and examine a thing at his feet, turning it over with his nose or giving it a scrape with his paw, it was usually worth joining in the inspection. The Hottentot-gods always attracted him as they reared up and 'prayed' before him ; quaint things, with tiny heads and thin necks and enormous eyes, that sat up with forelegs raised to pray, as a pet dog sits up and begs.



One day I was watching the ants as they travelled along their route—sometimes stopping to hobnob with those they met, sometimes hurrying past, and sometimes turning as though sent back on a message or reminded of something forgotten—when a little dry brown bean lying in a spot of sunlight gave a jump of an inch or two. At first it seemed that I must have unknowingly moved some twig or grass stem that flicked it ; but as I watched it there was another vigorous jump. I took it up and examined it but there was nothing unusual about it, it was just a common light brown bean with no peculiarities or marks ; it was a real puzzle, a most surprising and ridiculous one. I found half a dozen more in the same place ; but it was some days before we discovered the



secret. Domiciled in each of them was a very small but very energetic worm, with a trap-door or stopper on his one end, so artfully contrived that it was almost impossible with the naked eye to locate the spot where the hole was. The worm objected to too much heat and if the beans were placed in the sun or near the fire the weird astonishing jumping would commence.

The beans were good for jumping for several months, and once in Delagoa, one of our party put some on a plate in the sun beside a fellow who had been doing himself too well for some time previously: he had become a perfect nuisance to us and we could not get rid of him. He had a mouth full of bread, and a mug of coffee on the way to help it down, when the first bean jumped. He gave a sort of peck, blinked several times to clear his eyes, and then with his left hand pulled slightly at his collar, as though to ease it. Then came another jump, and his mouth opened slowly and his eyes got big. The plate being hollow and glazed was not a fair field for the jumpers—they could not escape; and in about half a minute eight or ten beans were having a rough and tumble.

With a white scared face our guest slowly lowered his mug, screened his eyes with the other hand, and after fighting down the mouthful of bread, got up and walked off without a word.

We tried to smother our laughter, but some one's choking made him look back and he saw the whole lot of us in various stages of convulsions. He made

one rude remark, and went on; but every one he met that day made

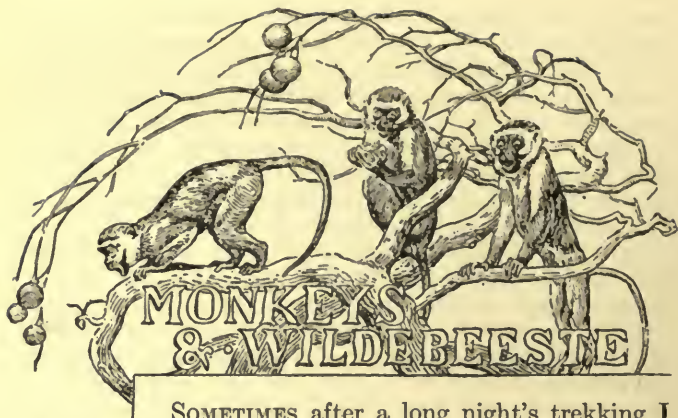
some allusion to beans, and he took the Durban steamer next morning.

The insect life was prodigious in its numbers and variety; and the birds, the



beasts, and the reptiles were all interesting. There is a goodness-knows-what-will-turn-up-next atmosphere about the Bushveld which is, I fancy, unique. The story of the curate, armed with a butterfly net, coming face to face with a black-maned lion may or may not be true—in fact; but it is true enough as an illustration; and it is no more absurd or unlikely than the meeting at five yards of a lioness and a fever-stricken lad carrying a white green-lined umbrella—which is true! The boy stood and looked: the lioness did the same. “She seemed to think I was not worth eating, so she walked off,” he used to say—and he was Trooper 242 of the Imperial Light Horse who went back under fire for wounded comrades and was killed as he brought the last one out.





SOMETIMES after a long night's trekking I would start off after breakfast for some 'likely' spot, off-saddle there in a shady place, sleep during the heat of the day, and after a billy of tea start hunting towards the waggons in the afternoon.

It was in such a spot on the Komati River, a couple of hundred yards from the bank, that on one occasion I settled down to make up lost ground in the matter of sleep, and with Mungo knee-haltered in good grass and Jock beside me, I lay flat on my back with hat covering my eyes and was soon comfortably asleep.

The sleep had lasted a couple of hours when I began to dream that it was raining and woke up in the belief that a hailstorm—following the rain—was just breaking over me. I started up to find all just as it had been, and the sunlight beyond the big tree so glaring as to make the eyes ache. Through half-closed lids I saw Mungo lying down asleep and made out Jock standing some yards away quietly watching me.

With a yawn and stretch I lay back again; sleep was over but a good lazy rest was welcome: it had been earned, and, most comforting of all, there was nothing else to be done. In the doze that followed I was surprised to feel quite distinctly something like a

drop of rain strike my leg, and then another on my hat.

"Hang it all, it is raining," I said, sitting up again and quite wide awake this time. There was Jock still looking at me, but only for the moment of moving, it appears; for, a minute later he looked up into the tree above me with ears cooked, head on one side, and tail held lazily on the horizontal and moving slowly from time to time.

It was his look of interested amusement.

A couple of leaves fluttered down, and then the half-eaten pip of a 'wooden orange' struck me in the face as I lay back again to see what was going on above. The pip gave me the line, and away up among the thick dark foliage I saw a little old face looking down at me; the quick restless eyes were watchfully on the move, and the mouth partly opened in the shape of an O—face and attitude together a vivid expression of surprise and indignation combined with breathless interest.

As my eyes fairly met those above me, the monkey ducked its head forward and promptly 'made a face' at me without uttering a sound. Then others showed up in different places, and whole figures became visible now as the monkeys stole softly along the branches to get a better look at Jock and me: there were a couple of dozen of them of all sizes.

They are the liveliest, most restless, and most inquisitive of creatures; ludierously nervous and excitable; quick to chattering anger and bursts of hysterical passion, which are intensely comical, especially when they have been scared. They are creatures whose method of progress most readily betrays them by the swaying of a branch or quivering of leaves, yet they can steal about and melt away at will, like small grey ghosts, silent as the grave.

I had often tried to trap them, but never succeeded: Jantje caught them, as he caught everything, with cunning that out-matched his milder kindred; pitfalls,

nooses, whip-traps, fall-traps, foot-snares, drags, slip-knots of all kinds, and tricks that I cannot now remember, were in his repertory ; but he disliked showing his traps, and when told to explain he would half sulkily show one of the common kind.

The day he caught the monkey he was well pleased, and may possibly have told the truth. Baboons and monkeys, he said, can count just like men, but they can only count two ! If one man goes into a mealie field and waits for them with a gun, their sentry will see him, and he may wait for ever ; if two go and one remains, it is useless, for they realise that only one has come out where two went in ; but if three go in, one may remain behind to lie in wait for them, for the monkeys, seeing more than one return, will invade the mealie field as soon as the two are safely out of the way. That was only Jantje's explanation of the well-known fact that monkeys and baboons know the difference between one and more than one.

But, as Jantje explained, their cleverness helped him to catch them. He went alone and came away alone, leaving his trap behind, knowing that they were watching his every movement, but knowing also that their intense curiosity would draw them to it the moment it seemed safe. The trap he used was an old calabash or gourd with a round hole in it about an inch in diameter ; and a few pumpkin seeds and mealies and a hard crust of bread, just small enough to get into the calabash, formed the bait.

After fastening the gourd by a cord to a small stump, he left it lying on its side on the ground where he had been sitting. A few crumbs and seeds were dropped near it and the rest placed in the gourd, with one or two showing in the mouth. Then he walked off on the side where he would be longest in view, and when well out of sight sped round in a circuit to a previously selected spot where he could get close up again and watch.

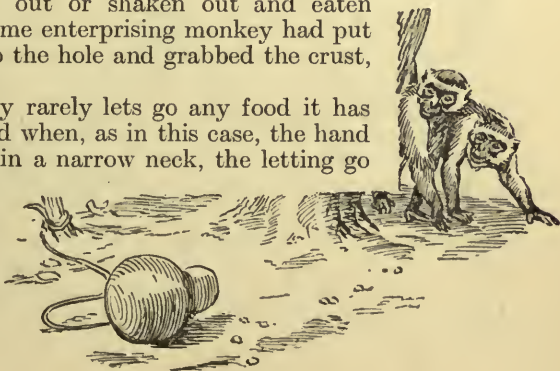
The foremost monkey was already on the ground

when he got back and others were hanging from low branches or clinging to the stems, ready to drop or retreat. Then began the grunts and careful timid approaches, such as one sees in a party of children hunting for the hidden 'ghost' who is expected to appear suddenly and chase them; next, the chattering garrulous warnings and protests from the timid ones—the females—in the upper branches; the sudden start and scurry of one of the youngsters; and the scare communicated to all, making even the leader jump back a pace; then his angry grunt and loud scolding of the frightened ones—angry because they had given him a fright, and loud because he was reassuring himself.

After a pause they began the careful roundabout approach and the squatting and waiting, making pretences of not being particularly interested, while their quick eyes watched everything; then the deft picking up of one thing—instantly dropped again, as one picks up a roasted chestnut and drops it in the same movement, in case it should be hot; and finally the greedy scramble and chatter.

I have seen all that, but not, alas, the successful ending, when trying to imitate Jantje's methods. Jantje waited until the tugs at the gourd became serious, and then, knowing that the smaller things had been taken out or shaken out and eaten and that some enterprising monkey had put its arm into the hole and grabbed the crust, he ran out.

A monkey rarely lets go any food it has grabbed and when, as in this case, the hand is jammed in a narrow neck, the letting go cannot easily be done instinctively or inadvertently;



the act requires a deliberate effort. So Jantje caught his monkey, and flinging his ragged coat over the captive sat down to make it safe. By pushing the monkey's arm deeper into the gourd the crust became released and the hand freed; he then gradually shifted the monkey about until he got the head into the shoulders of the loose old coat, and thence into the sleeve; and worked away at this until he had the creature as helpless as a mummy, with the head appearing at the cuff-opening and the body jammed in the sleeve like a bulging over-stuffed sausage. The monkey struggled, screamed, chattered, made faces, and cried like a child; but Jantje gripping it between his knees worked away unmoved.

He next took the cord from the calabash and tied one end securely round the monkey's neck, to the shrinking horror of that individual, and the other end to a stout bush stick about seven or eight feet long; and then slipped monkey cord and stick back through the sleeve and had his captive safe; the cord prevented it from getting away, and the stick from getting too close and biting him. When they sat opposite and pulled faces at each other the family likeness was surprising.

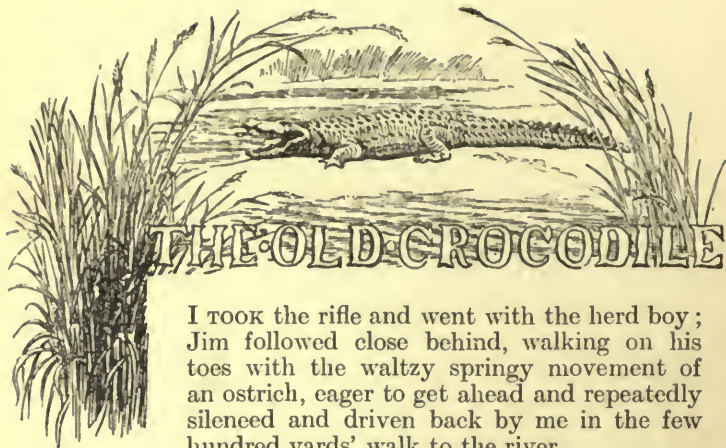
The grimacing little imps invariably tempt one to tease or chase them, just to see their antics and methods; and when I rose, openly watching them and stepping about for a better view, they abandoned the silent methods and bounded freely from branch to branch for fresh cover, always ducking behind something if I pointed the gun or a stick or even my arm at them, and getting into paroxysms of rage and leaning over to slang and cheek me whenever it seemed safe.

Jock was full of excitement, thoroughly warmed up and anxious to be at them, running about from place to place to watch them, tacking and turning and jumping for better views, and now and then running to the trunk and scraping at it. Whenever he did this there was a moment's silence; the idea of playing a trick on them struck me and I caught Jock up and put him in

the fork of a big main branch about six feet from the ground. The effect was magical : the whole of the top of the tree seemed to whip and rustle at once, and in two seconds there was not a monkey left.

Then a wave in the top of a small tree some distance off betrayed them and we gave chase—a useless romping school-boy chase. They were in the small trees away from the river and it was easy to see and follow them ; and to add to the fun and excitement I threw stones at the branches behind them. Their excitement and alarm then became hysterical, and as we darted about to head them off they were several times obliged to scamper a few yards along the ground to avoid me and gain other trees. It was then that Jock enjoyed himself most : he ran at them and made flying leaps and snaps as they sprang up the trees out of reach. It was like a caricature of children in one of their make-believe chases ; the screams, grimaces, and actions were so human that it would have seemed like a tragedy had one of them been hurt. They got away into the big trees once more, to Jock's disappointment but greatly to my relief ; for I was quite pumped from the romp and laughter.





THE OLD CROCODILE

I TOOK the rifle and went with the herd boy ; Jim followed close behind, walking on his toes with the waltzy springy movement of an ostrich, eager to get ahead and repeatedly silenced and driven back by me in the few hundred yards' walk to the river.

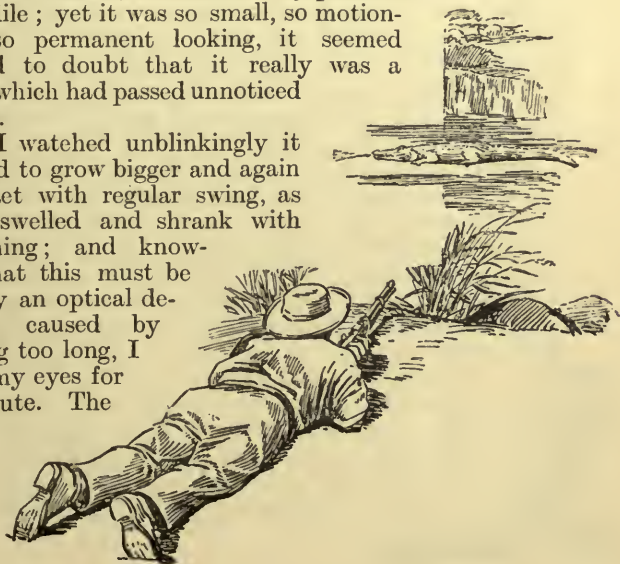
A queer premonitory feeling came over me as I saw we were making straight for the bathing pool ; but before reaching the bank the herd boy squatted down, indicating that somewhere in front and below us the enemy would be found. An easy crawl brought me to the river bank and, sure enough, on the very spot where I had stood to wash, only fifty yards from us, there was an enormous crocodile. He was lying along the sand-spit with his full length exposed to me. Such a shot would have been a moral certainty, but as I brought the rifle slowly up it may have glinted in the sun, or perhaps the crocodile had been watching us all the time, for with one easy turn and no splash at all he slid into the river and was gone.

It was very disgusting and I pitched into Jim and the other boys behind for having made a noise and shown themselves ; but they were still squatting when I reached them and vowed they had neither moved nor spoken. We had already turned to go when there came a distant call from beyond the river. To me it was merely a kaffir's voice and a sound quite meaningless : but to the boys' trained ears it spoke clearly. Jim pressed me downwards and we all squatted again.

"He is coming out on another sandbank," Jim explained.

Again I crawled to the bank and lay flat, with the rifle ready. There was another sand streak a hundred yards out in the stream with two out-croppings of black rock at the upper end of it—they were rocks right enough, for I had examined them carefully when bathing. This was the only other sandbank in sight : it was higher than it appeared to be from a distance and the crocodile whilst hidden from us was visible to the natives on the opposite bank as it lay in the shallow water and emerged inch by inch to resume its morning sun bath. The crocodile was so slow in showing up that I quite thought it had been seared off again, and I turned to examine other objects and spots up and down the stream ; but presently glancing back at the bank again I saw what appeared to be a third rock, no bigger than a loaf of bread. This object I watched until my eyes ached and swam ; it was the only possible crocodile ; yet it was so small, so motionless, so permanent looking, it seemed absurd to doubt that it really was a stone which had passed unnoticed before.

As I watched unblinkingly it seemed to grow bigger and again contract with regular swing, as if it swelled and shrank with breathing ; and knowing that this must be merely an optical delusion caused by staring too long, I shut my eyes for a minute. The





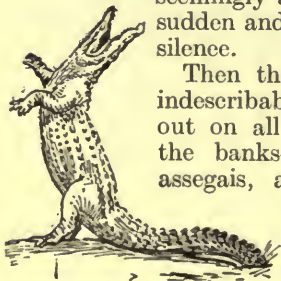
effect was excellent : the rock was much bigger ; and after that it was easy to lie still and wait for the cunning old reptile to show himself.

It took half an hour of this cautious manœuvring and edging on the part of the crocodile before he was comfortably settled on the sand with the sun warming all his back. In the meantime the waggon boys behind me had not stirred ; on the opposite side of the river kaffirs from the neighbouring kraal had gathered to the number of thirty or forty, men, women and children, and they stood loosely grouped, instinctively still silent and watchful, like a little scattered herd of deer. All on both sides were watching me and waiting for the shot. It seemed useless to delay longer ; the whole length of the body was showing, but it looked so wanting in thickness, so shallow in fact, that it was evident the crocodile was lying, not on the top, but on the other slope of the sand-spit ; and probably not more than six or eight inches—in depth—of body was visible.

It was little enough to aim at, and the bullet seemed to strike the top of the bank first, sending up a column of sand, and then, probably knocked all out of shape, ploughed into the body with a tremendous thump.

The crocodile threw a back somersault—that is, it seemed to rear up on its tail and spring backwards ; the jaws divided into a huge fork as, for a second, it stood up on end ; and it let out an enraged roar, seemingly aimed at the heavens. It was a very sudden and dramatic effect, following on the long silence.

Then the whole world seemed to burst into indescribable turmoil ; shouts and yells burst out on all sides ; the kaffirs rushed down to the banks—the men armed with sticks and assegais, and the women and children with nothing more formidable than their



voices; the crocodile was alive—very much alive—and in the water; the waggon boys, headed by Jim, were all round me and all yelling out together what should or should not be done, and what would happen if we did or did not do it. It was Babel and Bedlam let loose.

With the first plunge the crocodile disappeared, but it came up again ten yards away thrashing the water into foam and going up stream like a paddle-boat gone reeling roaring mad—if one can imagine such a thing! I had another shot at him the instant he reappeared, but one could neither see nor hear where it struck; and again and again I fired whenever he showed up for a second. He appeared to be shot through the lungs; at any rate the kaffirs on the other bank, who were then quite close enough to see, said that it was so. The waggon boys had run down the bank out on to the first sand-spit and I followed them, shouting to the kaffirs opposite to get out of the line of fire, as I could no longer shoot without risk of hitting them.

The crocodile after his first straight dash up stream had tacked about in all directions during the next few minutes, disappearing for short spells and plunging out again in unexpected places. One of these sudden reappearances brought him once more abreast, and quite near to us, and Jim with a fierce yell and with his assegai held high in his right hand dashed into the water, going through the shallows in wild leaps. I called to him to come back but against his yells and the excited shouts of the ever-increasing crowd my voice could not live; and Jim, mad with excitement, went on. Twenty yards out, where increasing depth steadied him, he turned for a moment and seeing himself alone in the water called to me with eager confidence, "Come on, Baas."

It had never occurred to me that any one would be such an idiot as to go into water after a wounded crocodile. There was no need to finish off this one, for it was bound to die, and no one wanted the meat or skin. Who, then, would be so mad as to think of such



a thing? Five minutes earlier I would have answered very confidently for myself; but there are times when one cannot afford to be sensible. There was a world of unconscious irony in Jim's choice of words "*Come on!*" and "*Baas!*"

The boy giving the lead to his master was too much for me; and in I went!

I cannot say that there was much enjoyment in it for the first few moments—not until the excitement took hold and all else was forgotten. The first thing that struck me was that in the deep water my rifle was worth no more than a walking-stick, and not nearly as useful as an assegai; but what drove this and many other thoughts from my mind in a second was the appearance of Jock on the stage and his sudden jump into the leading place.

In the first confusion he had passed unnoticed, probably at my heels as usual, but the instant I answered Jim's challenge by jumping into the water he gave one whimpering yelp of excitement and plunged in too; and in a few seconds he had out-distanced us all and was leading straight for the crocodile. I shouted to him, of course in vain—he heard nothing; and Jim and I plunged and struggled along to head the dog off.

As the crocodile came up Jock went straight for him—his eyes gleaming, his shoulders up, his nose out, his neck stretched to the utmost in his eagerness—and he ploughed along straining every muscle to catch up. When the crocodile went under he slackened and looked anxiously about, but each fresh rise was greeted by the whimpering yelps of intense suppressed excitement as he fairly hoisted himself out of the water with the vigour of his swimming.

The water was now breast-high for us, and we were far out in the stream, beyond the sand-spit where the crocodile had lain, when the kaffirs on the bank got their first chance and a flight of assegais went at the enemy as he rose. Several struck and two remained in



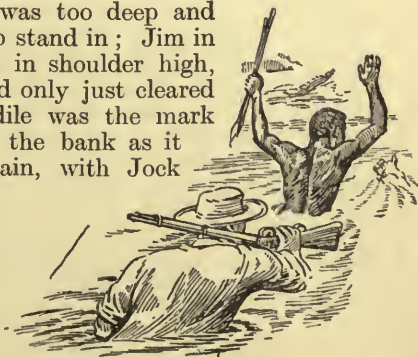
"THE LASHING TAIL SENT THE DOG UP WITH A COLUMN OF WATER"

him ; he rose again a few yards from Jim, and that sportsman let fly one that struck well home. Jock, who had been toiling close behind for some time and gaining slowly, was not five yards off then ; the floundering and lashing of the crocodile were bewildering, but on he went as grimly and eagerly as ever. I fired again—not more than eight yards away—but the water was then up to my arms, and it was impossible to pick a vital part ; the brain and neck were the only spots to finish him, but one could see nothing beyond a great upheaval of water and clouds of spray and blood-stained foam.

The crocodile turned from the shot and dived up stream, heading straight for Jock : the din of yelling voices stopped instantly as the huge open-mouthed thing plunged towards the dog ; and for one sick horrified moment I stood and watched—helpless.

Had the crocodile risen in front of Jock that would have been the end—one snap would have done it ; but it passed clear underneath, and, coming up just beyond him, the great lashing tail sent the dog up with the column of water a couple of feet in the air. He did as he had done when the koodoo bull tossed him : his head was round straining to get at the crocodile before he was able to turn his body in the water ; and the silence was broken by a yell of wild delight and approval from the bank.

Before us the water was too deep and the stream too strong to stand in ; Jim in his eagerness had gone in shoulder high, and my rifle when aimed only just cleared the water. The crocodile was the mark for more assegais from the bank as it charged up stream again, with Jock tailing behind, and it was then easy enough to follow its movements by the shafts that were never all



submerged. The struggles became perceptibly weaker, and as it turned again to go with the stream every effort was concentrated on killing and landing it before it reached the rocks and rapids.

I moved back for higher ground and, finding that the bed shelved up rapidly down stream, made for a position where there would be enough elevation to put in a brain shot. The water was not more than waist high then, and as the crocodile came rolling and thrashing down I waited for his head to show up clearly. My right foot touched a sloping rock which rose almost to the surface of the water close above the rapids, and anxious to get the best possible position for a last shot, I took my stand there. The rock was the ordinary shelving bedrock, uptilted at an easy angle and cut off sheer on the exposed side, and the wave in the current would have shown this to any one not wholly occupied with other things; but I had eyes for nothing except the crocodile which was then less than a dozen yards off, and in my anxiety to secure a firm footing for the shot I moved the right foot again a few inches—over the edge of the rock. The result was as complete a spill as if one unthinkingly stepped backwards off a diving board: I disappeared in deep water, with the knowledge that the crocodile would join me there in a few seconds.

One never knows how these things are done or how long they take: I was back on the rock—without the rifle—and had the water out of my eyes in time to see the crocodile roll helplessly by, six feet away, with Jock behind making excited but ridiculously futile attempts to get hold of the tail; Jim—swimming, plunging and blowing like a maddened hippo—formed the tail of the procession, which was headed by my water-logged hat floating heavily a yard or so in front of the crocodile.

While a crowd of yelling niggers under the generalship of Jim were landing the crocodile, I had time

to do some diving, and managed to fish out my rifle.

My Sunday change was wasted. But we got the old crocodile ; and that was something, after all.





THE FIGHTING-BABOON

ON the way to Lydenburg, not many treks from Paradise Camp, we were outspanned for the day. Those were the settled parts; on the hills and in the valleys about us were the widely scattered workings of the gold diggers or the white tents of occasional prospectors.



The place was a well-known and much-frequented public outspan, and a fair sized wayside store marked its importance. After breakfast we went to the store to 'swap' news with the men on the spot and a couple of horsemen who had off-saddled there.

There were several other houses of sorts; they were rough wattle and daub erections which were called houses, as an acknowledgment of pretensions expressed in the rectangular shape and corrugated iron roof. One of these belonged to Seedling, the Field Cornet and only official in the district. He was the petty local Justice who was supposed to administer minor laws, collect certain revenues and taxes, and issue passes. The salary was nominal, but the position bristled with opportunities for one who was not very particular; and the then occupant of the office seemed well enough pleased with the arrangement, whatever the public may have thought of it.

He was neither popular nor trusted: many tales of great harshness and injustice to the natives, and of corruption and favouritism in dealing with the whites, added to habitual drunkenness and uncertain

temper, made a formidable tally in the account against him; he was also a bully and a coward, and all knew it; but unfortunately he was the law—as it stood for us!

We had forgotten Seedling, and were hearing all about the new finds reported from Barberton district, when one of the waggon boys came running into the store calling to me by my kaffir name and shouting excitedly, “Baas, Baas! come quickly! The baboon has got Jock: it will kill him!”

I had known all about the vicious brute, and had often heard of Seedling’s fiendish delight in arranging fights or enticing dogs up to attack it for the pleasure of seeing the beast kill the over-matched dogs. The dog had no chance at all, for the baboon remained out of reach in his house on the pole as long as it chose, if the dog was too big or the opening not a good one, and made its rush when it would tell best. But apart from this the baboon was an exceptionally big and powerful one, and it is very doubtful if any dog could have tackled it successfully in an open fight. The creature was as clever as even a dog can be; its enormous jaws and teeth were quite equal to the biggest dog’s, and it had the advantage of four ‘hands.’ Its tactics in a fight were quite simple and most effective: with its front feet it caught the dog by the ears or neck, holding the head so that there was no risk of being bitten, and then gripping the body lower down with the hind feet, it tore lumps out of the throat, breast, and stomach—pushing with all four feet and tearing with the

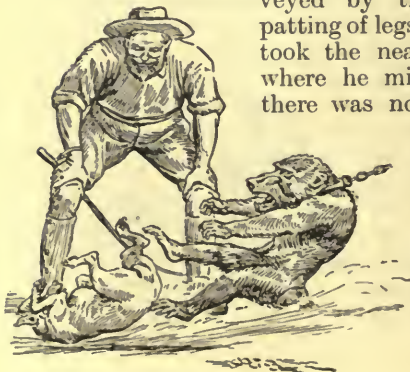


terrible teeth. The poor dogs were hopelessly out-matched.

I did not see the beginning of Joek's encounter, but the boys' stories pieced together told everything. It appears that when Seedling left the store he went in to his own hut and remained there some little time ; on coming out again he strolled over to the baboon's pole about half way between the two houses and began teasing it, throwing pebbles at it to see it dodge and duck behind the pole, and then flicking at it with the sjambok, amused by its frightened and angry protests. While he was doing this, Joek, who had followed me to the store, strolled out again making his way towards the waggons. He was not interested in our talk ; he had twice been accidentally trodden on by men stepping back as he lay stretched out on the floor behind them ; and doubtless he felt that it was no place for him : his deafness prevented him from hearing movements, except such as caused vibration in the ground, and, poor old fellow, he was always at a disadvantage in houses and towns.

The baboon had then taken refuge in its box on top of the pole to escape the sjambok, and when Seedling saw Joek come out he commenced whistling and calling softly to him. Joek, of course, heard nothing : he may have responded mildly to the friendly overtures conveyed by the extended hand and patting of legs, or more probably simply took the nearest way to the waggon where he might sleep in peace, since there was nothing else to do. What

the boys agree on is that as Joek passed the pole Seedling patted and held him, at the same time calling the baboon, and then gave the dog a push which did not quite roll him over but upset his



balance; and Jock, recovering himself, naturally jumped round and faced Seedling, standing almost directly between him and the baboon. He could not hear the rattle of the chain on the box and pole, and saw nothing of the charging brute, and it was the purest accident that the dog stood a few inches out of reach. The baboon—chained by the neck instead of the waist, because it used to bite through all loin straps—made its rush, but the chain brought it up before its hands could reach Jock and threw the hind-quarters round with such force against him that he was sent rolling yards away.

I can well believe that this second attack from a different and wholly unexpected quarter thoroughly roused him, and can picture how he turned to face it.

It was at this moment that Jim first noticed what was going on. The other boys had not expected anything when Seedling called the dog, and they were taken completely by surprise by what followed. Jim would have known what to expect: his kraal was in the neighbourhood; he knew Seedling well, and had already suffered in fines and confiscations at his hands; he also knew about the baboon; but he was ignorant, just as I was, of the fact that Seedling had left his old place across the river and come to live in the new hut, bringing his pet with him.

It was the hoarse threatening shout of the baboon as it jumped at Jock, as much as the exclamations of the boys, that roused Jim. He knew instantly what was on, and grabbing a stick made a dash to save the dog, with the other boys following him.

When Jock was sent spinning in the dust the baboon recovered itself first, and standing up on its hind legs reached out its long ungainly arms towards him, and let out a shout of defiance. Jock regaining his feet dashed in, jumped aside, feinted again and again, as he had learnt to do when big horns swished at him; and he kept out of reach just as he had done ever since the duiker taught him the use of its hoofs. He knew what

to do, just as he had known how to swing the poreupine : the dog—for all the fighting fury that possessed him—took the measure of the chain and kept outside it. Round and round he flew, darting in, jumping back, snapping and dodging, but never getting right home. The baboon was as clever as he was : at times it jumped several feet in the air, straight up, in the hope that Jock would run underneath ; at others, it would make a sudden lunge with the long arms, or a more surprising reach out with the hind legs to grab him. Then the baboon began gradually to reduce its circle, leaving behind it slack chain enough for a spring ; but Jock was not to be drawn. In cleverness they were well-matched—neither scored in attack ; neither made or lost a point.

When Jim rushed up to save Jock, it was with eager anxious shouts of the dog's name that warned Seedling and made him turn ; and as the boy ran forward the white man stepped out to stop him.

"Leave the dog alone !" he shouted, pale with anger.

"Baas, Baas, the dog will be killed," Jim called excitedly, as he tried to get round ; but the white man made a jump towards him, and with a backhand slash of the sjambok struck him across the face, shouting at him again :

"Leave him, I tell you."

Jim jumped back, thrusting out his stiek to guard another vicious cut ; and so it went on with alternate slash and guard, and the big Zulu danced round with nimble bounds, guarding, dodging, or bearing the sjambok cuts, to save the dog. Seedling was mad with rage ; for who had ever heard of a nigger standing up to a Field Cornet ? Still Jim would not give way ; he kept trying to get in front of Jock, to head him off the fight, and all the while shouting to the other boys to call me. But Seedling was the Field Cornet, and not one of them dared to move against him.

At last the baboon, finding that Jock would not come on, tried other tactics ; it made a sudden retreat and,

rushing for the pole, hid behind it as for protection. Jock made a jump and the baboon leaped out to meet him, but the dog stopped at the chain's limit, and the baboon—just as in the first dash of all—overshot the mark; it was brought up by the jerk of the collar, and for one second sprawled on its back. That was the first chance for Jock, and he took it. With one spring he was in; his head shot between the baboon's hind legs, and with his teeth buried in the soft stomach he lay back and pulled—pulled for dear life, as he had pulled and dragged on the legs of wounded game; tugged as he had tugged at the porcupine; held on, as he had held when the koodoo bull wrenched and strained every bone and muscle in his body.

Then came the sudden turn! As Jock fastened on to the baboon, dragging the chain taut while the screaming brute struggled on its back, Seedling stood for a second irresolute, and then with a stride forward raised his sjambok to strike the dog. That was too much for Jim; he made a spring in and grasping the raised sjambok with his left hand held Seedling powerless, while in his right the boy raised his stick on guard.

"Let him fight, Baas! You said it! Let the dog fight!" he panted, hoarse with excitement.

The white man, livid with fury, struggled and kicked, but the wrist loop of his sjambok held him prisoner and he could do nothing.

That was the moment when a panic-stricken boy plucked up courage enough to call me; and that was the scene we saw as we ran out of the little shop. Jim would not strike the white man; but his face was a muddy grey, and it was written there that he would rather die than give up the dog.

Before I reached them it was clear to us all what had happened: Jim



was protesting to Seedling and at the same time calling to me ; it was a jumble, but a jumble eloquent for us, and all intelligible. Jim's excited gabble was addressed with reckless incoherence to Seedling, to me, and to Joek !

" You threw him in ; you tried to kill him. He did it. It was not the dog. Kill him, Joek, kill him. Leave him, let him fight. You said it—Let him fight ! Kill him, Joek ! Kill ! Kill ! Kill ! "

Then Seedling did the worst thing possible ; he turned on me with,

" Call off your dog, I tell you, or I'll shoot him and your —— nigger too ! "

" We'll see about that ! They can fight it out now, " and I took the sjambok from Jim's hand and cut it from the white man's wrist.

" Now ! Stand back ! "

And he stood back.

The baboon was quite helpless. Powerful as the brute was, and formidable as were the arms and gripping feet, it had no chance while Joek could keep his feet and had strength to drag and hold the chain tight. The collar was choking it, and the grip on the stomach—the baboon's own favourite and most successful device—was fatal.

I set my teeth, and thought of the poor helpless dogs that had been decoyed in and treated the same way. Jim danced about, the white seam of froth on his lips, hoarse gusts of encouragement bursting from him as he leant over Joek, and his whole body vibrating like an over-heated boiler. And Joek hung on in grim earnest, the silence on his side broken only by grunting efforts as the deadly tug—tug—tug went on. Each pull caused his feet to slip a little on the smooth worn ground ; but each time he set them back again, and the grunting tugs went on.

* * * * *

It was not justice to call Joek off ; but I did it. The

eruel brute deserved killing, but the human look and eries and behaviour of the baboon were too sickening ; and Seedling went into his hut without even a look at his stricken ehampion.

Joek stood off, with his mouth open from ear to ear and his red tongue dangling, blood-stained and panting, but with eager feet ever on the move shifting from spot to spot, ears going back and forward, and eyes—now on the baboon and now on me—pleading for the sign to go in again.

Before evening the baboon was dead.





WE had not touched fresh meat for many days, as there had been no time for shooting; but I knew that game was plentiful across the river in the rough country between the Kaap and Crocodile, and I started off to make the best of the day's delay, little dreaming that it was to be the last time Jock and I would hunt together.

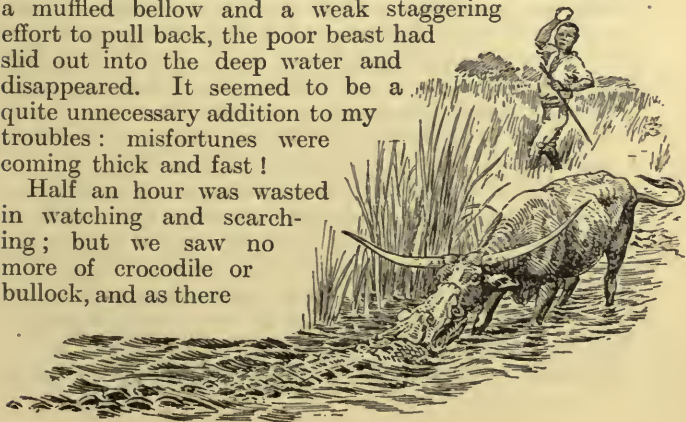
Weeks had passed without a hunt, and Jock must have thought there was a sad falling away on the part of his master; he no longer expected anything; the rifle was never taken down now except for an odd shot from the outspan or to put some poor animal out of its misery. Since the night with the lions, when he had been ignominiously cooped up, there had been nothing to stir his blood and make life worth living; and this morning as he saw me rise from breakfast and proceed to potter about the waggons in the way he had come to regard as inevitable, he looked on indifferently for a few minutes and then stretched out full length in the sun and went to sleep.

I could not take him with me across the river, as the 'fly' was said to be bad there, and it was no place to

risk horse or dog. The best of prospects would not have tempted me to take chance with him, but I hated ordering him to stay behind, as it hurt his dignity and sense of comradeship, so it seemed a happy accident that he was asleep and I could slip away unseen. As the cattle were grazing along the river-bank only a few hundred yards off, I took a turn that way to have a look at them, with natural but quite fruitless concern for their welfare, and a moment later met the herd-boy running towards me and calling out excitedly something which I made out to be :

"Crocodile ! Crocodile, Inkos ! A crocodile has taken one of the oxen." The waggon-boys heard it also, and armed with assegais and sticks were on the bank almost as soon as I was ; but there was no sign of crocodile or bullock. The boy showed us the place where the weakened animal had gone down to drink—the hoof slides were plain enough—and told how, as it drank, the long black coffin-head had appeared out of the water. He described stolidly how the big jaws had opened and gripped the bullock's nose ; how he, a few yards away, had seen the struggle ; how he had shouted and hurled his sticks and stones and tufts of grass, and feinted to rush down at it ; and how, after a muffled bellow and a weak staggering effort to pull back, the poor beast had slid out into the deep water and disappeared. It seemed to be a quite unnecessary addition to my troubles : misfortunes were coming thick and fast !

Half an hour was wasted in watching and searching ; but we saw no more of crocodile or bullock, and as there



was nothing to be done I turned up stream to find a shallower and a safer crossing.

At best it was not pleasant : the water was waist-high and racing in narrow channels between and over boulders and loose slippery stones, and I was glad to get through without a tumble and a swim.

The country was rough on the other side, and the old grass was high and dense, for no one went there in those days, and the grass stood unburnt from season to season. Climbing over rocks and stony ground, crunching dry sticks underfoot, and driving a path through the rank tambookil grass, it seemed well-nigh hopeless to look for a shot ; several times I heard buck start up and dash off only a few yards away, and it began to look as if the wiser course would be to turn back. At last I got out of the valley into more level and more open ground, and came out upon a ledge or plateau a hundred yards or more wide, with a low ridge of rocks and some thorns on the far side—quite a likely spot. I searched the open ground from my cover, and seeing nothing there crossed over to the rocks, threading my way silently between them and expecting to find another clear space beyond. The snort of a buck brought me to a standstill among the rocks, and as I listened it was followed by another and another from the same quarter, delivered at irregular intervals ; and each snort was accompanied by the sound of trampling feet, sometimes like stamps of anger and at other times seemingly a hasty movement.

I had on several occasions interrupted fights between angry rivals : once two splendid koodoo bulls were at it ; a second time it was two sables, and the vicious and incredibly swift sweep of the scimitar horns still lives in memory, along with the wonderful nimbleness of the other fellow who dodged it ; and another time they were blue wildebeeste ; but some interruption had occurred each time, and I had no more than a glimpse of what might have been a rare scene to witness.

I was determined not to spoil it this time : no doubt

it was a fight, and probably they were fencing and circling for an opening, as there was no bump of heads or clash of horns and no tearing scramble of feet to indicate the real struggle. I crept on through the rocks and found before me a tangle of thorns and dead wood, impossible to pass through in silence; it was better to work back again and try the other side of the rocks. The way was clearer there, and I crept up to a rock four or five feet high, feeling certain from the sound that the fight would be in full view a few yards beyond. With the rifle ready I raised myself slowly until my eyes were over the top of the rock. Some twenty yards off, in an open flat of downtrodden grass, I saw a sable cow: she was standing with feet firmly and widely planted, looking fiercely in front of her, ducking her head in threatening manner every few seconds, and giving angry snorts; and behind, and huddled up against her, was her seared bewildered little red-brown calf.

It seems stupid not to have guessed what it all meant; yet the fact is that for the few remaining seconds I was simply puzzled and fascinated by the behaviour of the two sables. Then in the corner of my eye I saw, away on my right, another red-brown thing come into the open: it was Jock, casting about with nose to ground for my trail which he had over-run at the point where I had turned back near the deadwood on the other side of the rocks.

What happened then was a matter of a second or two. As I turned to look at him he raised his head, bristled up all over, and made one jump forward; then a long low yellowish thing moved in the unbeaten grass in front of the sable cow, raised its head sharply, and looked full into my eyes; and before I could move a finger it shot away in one streak-like bound. A wild shot at the lioness, as I jumped up full height; a



shout at Jock to come back ; a seramble of black and brown on my left ; and it was all over ; I was standing in the open ground, breathless with excitement, and Joek, a few yards off, with hind-legs crouched ready for a dash, looking back at me for leave to go !

The spoor told the tale : there was the outer circle made by the lioness in the grass, broken in places where she had feinted to rush in and stopped before the lowered horns ; and inside this there was the smaller circle, a tangle of trampled grass and spoor, where the brave mother had stood between her young and death.

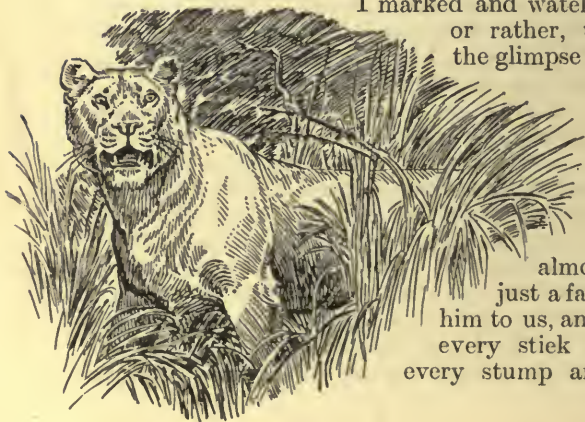
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Any attempt to follow the lioness after that would have been waste of time. We struck off in a new direction, and in crossing a stretch of level ground where the thorn-trees were well scattered and the grass fairly short my eye caught a movement in front that brought me to instant standstill. It was as if the stem of a young thorn-tree had suddenly waved itself and settled back again, and it meant that some long-horned buck, perhaps a koodoo or a sable bull, was lying down and had swung his head ; and it meant also that he was comfortably settled, quite unconscious of danger.

I marked and watched the spot,
or rather, the line, for
the glimpse was too brief

to tell more
than the
direction ;
but there
was no
other move.

The air was
almost still, with
just a faint drift from
him to us, and I examined
every stiek and branch,
every stump and ant-heap,





"THE BRAVE MOTHER STOOD BETWEEN HER YOUNG AND DEATH"

every bush and tussock, without stirring a foot. But I could make out nothing: I could trace no outline and see no patch of colour, dark or light, to betray him.

It was an incident very characteristic of Bushveld hunting. There I stood minute after minute—not risking a move, which would be certain to reveal me—staring and searching for some big animal lying half-asleep within eighty yards of me on ground that you would not call good cover for a rabbit. We were in the sunlight: he lay somewhere beyond, where a few scattered thorn-trees threw dabs of shade, marbling with dappled shade and light the already mottled surface of earth and grass. I was hopelessly beaten, but Jock could see him well enough; he crouched beside me with ears cocked, and his eyes, all ablaze, were fixed intently on the spot, except for an occasional swift look up to me to see what on earth was wrong and why the shot did not come; his hind-legs were tucked under him and he was trembling with excitement. Only those will realise it who have been through the tantalising humiliating experience. There was nothing to be done but wait, leaving the buck to make the first move.

And at last it came: there was another slight shake of the horns, and the whole figure stood out in bold relief. It

was a fine
sable bull
lying in the
shadow of
one of the thorn-
trees with his
back towards us,
and there was a
small ant-heap
close behind
him, making a
greyish blot
against his black





back and shoulder, and breaking the expanse of colour which the eye would otherwise easily have picked up.

The ant-heap made a certain shot impossible, so I lowered myself slowly to the ground to wait until he should begin feeding or change his position for comfort or shade, as they often do: this might mean waiting for half an hour or more, but it was better than risking a shot in the position in which he was lying. I settled down for a long wait with the rifle resting on my knees,

confidently expecting that when the time came to move he would get up slowly, stretch himself, and have a good look round. But he did nothing of the kind; a turn or eddy of the faint breeze must have given him my wind; for there was one twitch of the horns, as his nose was laid to windward, and without an instant's pause he dashed off. It was the quickest thing imaginable in a big animal: it looked as though he started racing from his lying position. The bush was not close enough to save him, however, in spite of his start, and through the thin veil of smoke I saw him plunge and stumble, and then dash off again; and Jock seeing me give chase, went ahead and in half a minute I was left well behind, but still in sight of the hunt.

I shouted at Jock to come back, just as one murmurs good-day to a passing friend in the din of traffic—from force of habit: of course, he could hear nothing. It was his first and only go at a sable; he knew nothing of the terrible horns and the deadly scythe-like sweep that make the wounded sable so dangerous—even the

lioness had fought shy of them—and great as was my faith in him, the risk in this case was not one I would have taken. There was nothing to do but follow. A quarter of a mile on I drew closer up and found them standing face to face among the thorns. It was the first of three or four stands ; the sable, with a watchful eye on me, always moved on as I drew near enough to shoot. The beautiful black and white bull stood facing his little red enemy and the fence and play of feint and thrust, guard and dodge, was wonderful to see. Not once did either touch the other ; at Jock's least movement the sable's head would go down with his nose into his chest and the magnificent horns arched forward and poised so as to strike either right or left, and if Jock feinted a rush either way the scythe-sweep came with lightning quickness, covering more than half a circle and carrying the gleaming points with a swing right over the sable's own back. Then he would advance slowly and menacingly, with horns well forward, ready to strike and eyes blazing through his eyebrows, driving Jock before him.

There were three or four of these encounters in which I could take no hand : the distance, the intervening thorns and grass, and the quickness of their movements, made a safe shot impossible ; and there was always the risk of hitting Jock, for a hard run does not make for good shooting. Each time as the sable drove him back there would be a short vicious rush suddenly following the first deliberate advance, and as Jock scrambled back out of the way the bull would swing round with incredible quickness and be off full gallop in another direction. Evidently the final rush was a manœuvre to get Jock clear of his heels and flanks as he started, and thus secure a lead for the next run.

Since the day he was kicked by the koodoo cow Jock had never tackled an unbroken hind-leg ; a dangling one he never missed ; but the lesson of the flying heels had been too severe to be forgotten, and he never made that mistake again. In this chase I saw him time after

time try at the sable's flanks and run up abreast of his shoulder and make flying leaps at the throat ; but he never got in front where the horns could reach him, and although he passed and repassed behind to try on the other side when he had failed at the one, and looked up eagerly at the hind-legs as he passed them, he made no attempt at them.

It must have been at the fourth or fifth stand that Joek got through the guard at last. The sable was badly wounded in the body and doubtless strength was failing, but there was little evidence of this yet. In the pauses Joek's tongue shot and slithered about, a glittering red streak, but after short spells of panting, his head would shut up with a snap like a steel trap and his face set with that look of invincible resolution which it got in part from the pursed-up mouth and in part from the intensity of the beady black-brown eyes ; he was good for hours of this sort of work.

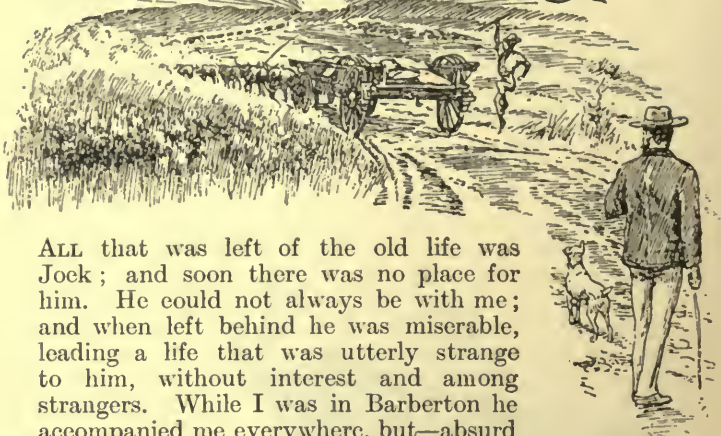
This time the sable drove him back towards a big thorn-tree. It may have been done without design, or it may have been done with the idea of pinning him up against the trunk. But Joek was not to be caught that way ; in a fight he took in the whole field, behind as well as in front—as he had shown the night the second wild dog tackled him. On his side, too, there may or may not have been design in backing towards the tree ; who knows ? I thought that he scored, not by a manœuvre, but simply because of his unrelaxing watchfulness and his resolute unhesitating courage. He seemed to know instinctively that the jump aside, so safe with the straight-charging animals, was no game to play against the side sweep of a sable's horns, and at each charge of the enemy he had scrambled back out of range without the least pretence of taking liberties.

This time the sable drove him steadily back towards the tree, but in the last step, just as the bull made his rush, Joek jumped past the tree and instead of scrambling back out of reach as before, dodged round and was in the rear of the buck before it could turn on

him. There were no flying heels to fear then, and without an instant's hesitation he fastened on one of the hind-legs above the hock. With a snort of rage and indignation the sable spun round and round, kicking and plunging wildly and making vicious sweeps with his horns; but Jock, although swung about and shaken like a rat, was out of reach and kept his grip. It was a quick and furious struggle, in which I was altogether forgotten, and as one more desperate plunge brought the bull down in a struggling kicking heap with Jock completely hidden under him, I ran up and ended the fight.



OUR VARIOUS WAYS



ALL that was left of the old life was Jock ; and soon there was no place for him. He could not always be with me ; and when left behind he was miserable, leading a life that was utterly strange to him, without interest and among strangers. While I was in Barberton he accompanied me everywhere, but—absurd as it seems—there was a constant danger for him there, greater though less glorious than those he faced so lightly in the veld. His deafness, which passed almost unnoticed and did not seem to handicap him at all in the veld, became a serious danger in camp. For a long time he had been unable to hear a sound, but he could *feel* sounds : that is to say, he was quick to notice anything that caused a vibration. In the early days of his deafness I had been worried by the thought that he would be run over while lying asleep near or under the waggons, and the boys were always on the look-out to stir him up ; but we soon found that this was not necessary. At the first movement he would feel the vibration and jump up. Jim realised this well enough, for when wishing to direct his attention to strange dogs or Shangaans, the villain could always dodge me by

stamping or hammering on the ground, and Joek always looked up: he seemed to know the difference between the sounds he could ignore, such as chopping wood, and those that he ought to notice.

In camp—Barberton in those days was reckoned a mining camp, and was always referred to as 'camp'—the danger was due to the number of sounds. He would stand behind me as I stopped in the street, and sometimes lie down and snooze if the wait was a long one; and the poor old fellow must have thought it a sad falling off, a weary monotonous change from the real life of the veld. At first he was very watchful, and every rumbling wheel or horse's footfall drew his alert little eyes round to the danger point; but the traffic and noise were almost continuous and one sound ran into another; and thus he became careless or puzzled and on several occasions had narrowly escaped being run over or trodden on.

Once, in desperation after a bad scare, I tried chaining him up, and although his injured reproachful look hurt, it did not weaken me: I had hardened my heart to do it, and it was for his own sake. At lunch-time he was still squatting at the full length of the chain, off the mat and straw, and with his head hanging in the most hopeless dejected attitude one could imagine. It was too much for me—the dog really felt it; and when I released him there was no rejoicing in his freedom as the hated collar and chain dropped off: he turned from me without a sign or sound of any sort, and walking off slowly, lay down some ten yards away with his head resting on his paws! He went to think—not to sleep.

I felt abominably guilty, and was conscious of wanting to make up for it all the afternoon.

Once I took him out to Fig Tree Creek fifteen miles

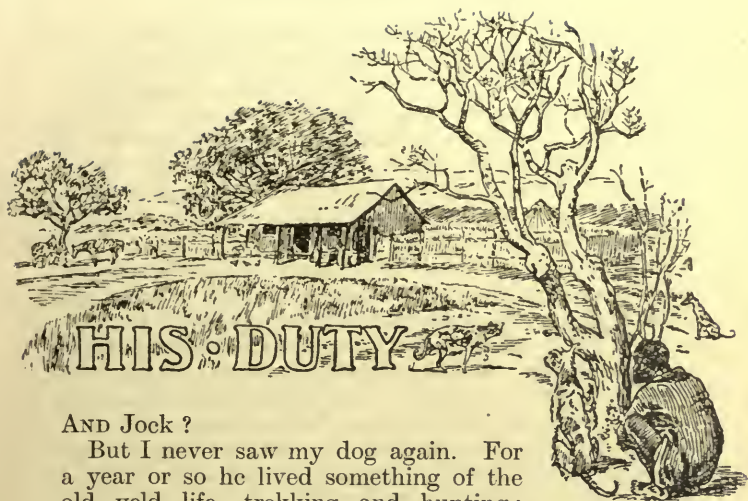


away, and left him with a prospector friend at whose camp in the hills it seemed he would be much better off and much happier. When I got back to Barberton that night he was waiting for me, with a tag of chewed rope hanging round his neck, not the least ashamed of himself, but openly rejoicing in the meeting and evidently never doubting that I was equally pleased. And he was quite right there.

But it could not go on. One day as he lay asleep behind me, a loaded waggon coming sharply round a corner as nearly as possible passed over him. The wheel was within inches of his back as he lay asleep in the sand: there was no chance to grab—it was a rush and a kick that saved him; and he rolled over under the waggon, and found his own way out between the wheels.

A few days after this Ted passed through Barberton, and I handed Joek over to him, to keep and to care for until I had a better and safer home for him.





AND Jock ?

But I never saw my dog again. For a year or so he lived something of the old veld life, trekking and hunting ; from time to time I heard of him from Ted and others : stories seemed to gather easily about him as they do about certain people, and many knew Jock and were glad to bring news of him. The things they thought wonderful and admirable made pleasant news for them to tell and welcome news to me, and they were heard with contented pride, but without surprise, as “ just like him ” : there was nothing more to be said.

One day I received word from Ted that he was off to Scotland for a few months and had left Jock with another old friend, Tom Barnett—Tom, at whose store under the Big Fig Tree, Seedling lies buried ; and although I was glad that he had been left with a good friend like Tom, who would care for him as well as any one could, the life there was not of the kind to suit him. For a few months it would not matter ; but I had no idea of letting him end his days as a watch-dog at a trader's store in the kaffir country. Tom's trouble was with thieves ; for the natives about there were not a good lot, and their dogs were worse. When Jock saw

or scented them, they had the poorest sort of luck or chance : he fought to kill, and not as town dogs fight ; he had learnt his work in a hard school, and he never stopped or slackened until the work was done ; so his fame soon spread and it brought Tom more peace than he had enjoyed for many a day. Natives no longer wandered at will into the reed-enclosed yard ; kaffir dogs ceased to sneak into the store and through the house, stealing everything they could get. Jock took up his place at the door, and hungry mongrels watched him from a distance or sneaked up a little closer when from time to time he trotted round to the yard at the back of the building to see how things were going there.

All that was well enough during the day ; but the trouble occurred at night. The kaffirs were too scared to risk being caught by him, but the dogs from the surrounding kraals prowled about after dark, scavenging and thieving where they could ; and what angered Tom most of all was the killing of his fowls. The yard at the back of the store was enclosed by a fence of close-packed reeds, and in the middle of the yard stood the fowl-house with a clear space of bare ground all round it. On many occasions kaffir dogs had found their way through the reed fence and killed fowls perching about the yard, and several times they had burgled the fowl-house itself. In spite of Jock's presence and reputation, this night robbing still continued, for while he slept peacefully in front of the store, the robbers would do their work at the back. Poor old fellow ! They were many and he was one ; they prowled night and day, and he had to sleep sometimes ; they were watchful and he was deaf ; so he had no chance at all unless he saw or scented them.

There were two small windows looking out on to the yard, but no door in the back of the building ; thus, in order to get into the yard, it was necessary to go out of the front door and round the side of the house. On many occasions Tom, roused by the screaming of the fowls, had seized his gun and run round to get a shot

at the thieves ; but the time so lost was enough for a kaffir dog, and the noise made in opening the reed gate gave ample warning of his coming.

The result was that Tom generally had all his trouble for nothing ; but it was not always so. Several times he roused Jock as he ran out, and invariably got some satisfaction out of what followed ; once Jock caught one of the thieves struggling to force a way through the fence and held on to the hind leg until Tom came up with the gun ; on other occasions he had caught them in the yard ; on others, again, he had run them down in the bush and finished it off there without help or hindrance.

That was the kind of life to which Jock seemed to have settled down.

He was then in the very prime of life, and I still hoped to get him back to me some day to a home where he would end his days in peace. Yet it seemed impossible to picture him in a life of ease and idleness—a watch-dog in a house sleeping away his life on a mat, his only excitement keeping off strange kaffirs and stray dogs, or burrowing for rats and moles in a garden, with old age, deafness, and infirmities growing year by year to make his end miserable. I had often thought that it might have been better had he died fighting—hanging on with his indomitable pluck and tenacity, tackling something with all the odds against him ; doing his duty and his best as he had always done—and died as Rocky's dog had died. If on that last day of our hunting together he had got at the lioness, and gone under in the hopeless fight ; if the sable bull had caught and finished him with one of the scythe-like sweeps of the scimitar horns ; if he could have died—like Nelson—in the hour of victory ! Would it not have been better for him—happier for me ? Often I thought so. For to fade slowly away ; to lose his strength and fire and intelligence ; to outlive his character, and no longer be himself ! No, that could not be happiness !

Well, Jock is dead ! Jock, the innocent cause of

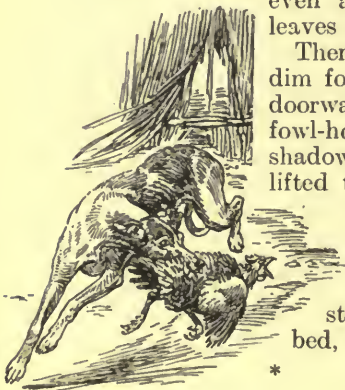
Seedling's downfall and death, lies buried under the same big fig-tree: the graves stand side by side. He died, as he lived—true to his trust; and this is how it happened, as it was faithfully told to me:

It was a bright moonlight night—think of the scores we had spent together, the mild glorious nights of the Bushveld!—and once more Tom was roused by a clatter of falling boxes and the wild screams of fowls in the yard. Only the night before the thieves had beaten him again; but this time he was determined to be even with them. Jumping out of bed he opened the little window looking out on to the fowl-house, and, with his gun resting on the sill, waited for the thief. He waited long and patiently; and by-and-by the screaming of the fowls subsided enough for him to hear the gurgling and scratching about in the fowl-house, and he settled down to a still longer watch; evidently the kaffir dog was enjoying his stolen meal in there.

“Go on! Finish it!” Tom muttered grimly; “I’ll have you this time if I wait till morning!”

So he stood at the window waiting and watching, until every sound had died away outside. He listened intently: there was not a stir; there was nothing to be seen in the moonlit yard; nothing to be heard; not even a breath of air to rustle the leaves in the big fig-tree.

Then, in the same dead stillness the dim form of a dog appeared in the doorway, stepped softly out of the fowl-house, and stood in the deep shadow of the little porch. Tom lifted the gun slowly and took careful aim. When the smoke cleared away, the figure of the dog lay still, stretched out on the ground where it had stood; and Tom went back to bed, satisfied.



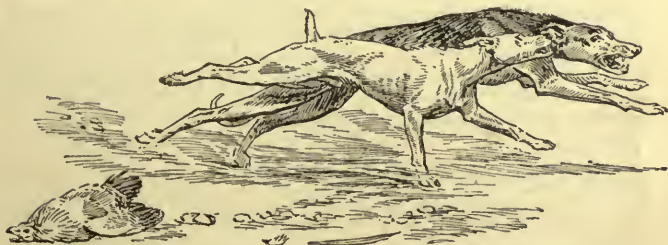
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The morning sun slanting across the yard shone in Tom's eyes as he pushed the reed gate open and made his way towards the fowl-house. Under the poreh, where the sunlight touched it, something shone like burnished gold.

He was stretched on his side—it might have been in sleep ; but on the snow-white chest there was one red spot.

And inside the fowl-house lay the kaffir dog—dead.

Jock had done his duty.



NOTE AND GLOSSARY

HAILSTORMS.—Bad hailstorms occur every year in South Africa, but they do not last long (ten minutes is enough to destroy everything that stands). The distances are immense, and the area of disturbance is usually a narrow strip; hence, except when one strikes a town, very few people ever witness them. A bad storm baffles description. The size of the hailstones is only one of the factors—a strong wind enormously increases the destructiveness; yet some idea may be gathered from the size of the stones. The writer took a plaster cast of one picked up at Zuurfontein (near Johannesburg), in November 1906, which measured $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches thick—a slab of white ice.

D means Dutch. N means native.

AASVOGEL (D), a vulture (*lit.* carrion bird).

ANTBEAR, AARDVARK (D) (*Orycteropus Afer*).

ANT-HEAP, mound made by termites or 'white ants.' Usually formed by one colony of ants; about two to four feet in base diameter and height, but often in certain localities very much larger.

ASSEGAI (*pro.* ass-e-guy) (N), native spear.

BAAS (D), master.

BANSELA (*pro.* baan-sé-la) (N), a present.

BEKER (*pro.* beaker) (D), a cup.

BILLY, a small tin utensil with lid and handle, used for boiling water.

BRET HARTE, an American author who wrote famous tales of life in Californian mining camps.

BUCKSAIL, tarpaulin used for covering transport waggons, which are known as buck-waggons.

BUFFALO, Cape buffalo. Height, 5 ft. 6 in.; weight, possibly 1000 lbs.; horns, 48 in. from tip to tip and 36 in. each in length on curve.

BULTONG, or **BILTONG** (*pro.* biltong) (D), meat cut in strips, slightly salted, and dried in the open air.

BUSHBUCK, a medium-sized but very courageous antelope. Height, 3 ft.; weight, 130 lbs.; horns (male only), 18 in.

BUSHVELD, properly **BOSCHVELD** (D), bush country; also called Low Veld and Low Country.

CALABASH, a dried gourd for holding water.

CARICATURE, a mock or exaggerated imitation.

DASSIE (*pro.* daas-ey) (D), rock-rabbit; coney (*lit.* little badger).

DÉBRIS, rubbish or remains of any kind, no longer of use.

- DELAGOA, a seaport on the East Coast, in Portuguese territory.
- DISSELBOOM (D), the pole of a vehicle.
- DONGA (N), a gully or dry watercourse with steep banks.
- DOUGHBOYS, scones; frequently unleavened dough baked in coals; also ash-cakes, roaster cookies, stick-in-the-gizzards, veld-bricks, &c.
- DRIFT (D), a ford.
- DUIKER (*pro.* in Eng. dyker, in Dutch dayker) (D), a small antelope found throughout Africa. Gross weight, 30 to 40 lbs.; height, 28 in.; horns, 5½ in. (*lit.* diver, so called from its habit of disappearing and reappearing in low scrub in a succession of bounds when it first starts running).
- DURBAN, a port in Natal, south of Delagoa Bay.
- FOSSICKING, feeling about with the hands.
- Go'WAY BIRD, the grey plantain eater.
- HARTEBEESTE (*pro.* haar-te-beast) (D), a large antelope, of which there are several varieties, varying in gross weight from 300 to 500 lbs. Height, 48 in.; horns, 24 in.
- HIGHVELD, properly HOOGEVELD (D), high country; the plateau, about 5000 to 6000 ft. above sea-level.
- HONEY-BIRD, the honey guide.
- HONEY-SUCKER, sunbird.
- HORSE-SICKNESS, a lung affection prevalent during summer in low-lying parts; generally fatal; caused by microbes introduced in the blood by some insect.
- IMPALA (N), an antelope; habitat, Bushveld; weight, 140 lbs.; horns, up to 20 in., straight.
- INDUNA (*pro.* in-doó-nah) (N), a head-man, captain, or chief, great or petty.
- INKOS (*pro.* in-kós—'os' as in verbose) (N), chief; used as a term of respect in address or salutation.
- INSPAN, properly ENSPAN (D), to yoke up, harness up, or hitch up.
- KAFFIR CORN, sorghum.
- KAHLE (*pro.* kaa-shle, corrupted in kitchen Kaffir to 'gaashly') (N), gently, carefully, pleasantly, well. 'Hamba kahle, farewell, go in peace.' Hlala (*pro.* shlala) kahle, 'farewell, stay in peace.'
- KEHLA (*pro.* keh-shlaa) (N), a native of certain age and position entitled to wear the head ring. Dutch, *ring kop*—ring head.
- KERRIE, or KIRRIE, native sticks used for fighting, frequently knobbed; hence, a knob-kerrie.
- KLIPSPRINGER (D), a small antelope, in appearance and habit rather like chamois (*lit.* a rock-jumper).
- KLOOF (D), a gorge.

- KNEEHALTER (D), to couple the head to one foreleg by a reim or strap attached to the halter, closely enough to prevent the animal from moving fast.
- KNOORHAAN, commonly, but incorrectly, KOORHAAN or KORAAN, (D), the smaller bustard.
- KOODOO, properly KUDU (N). Habitat, rugged bushy country. Height, 5 ft.; weight, 600 lbs.; horns, up to 48 in. straight, and 66 in. on curve.
- KOPJE (*pro. copy*) (D), a hill (*lit. a little head*).
- KRAAL (*pro. in Eng. crawl*) (D), an enclosure for cattle, sheep, &c., a corral; also a collection of native huts, the home of a family, the village of a chief or tribe.
- KRANS (D), often spelt KRANTZ (German) (D. *krans*, a circlet or crown), a precipitous face or coronet of rock on a hill or mountain.
- LAGAFAAN, a huge water lizard, the monitor. Maximum length up to 8 ft.
- LOOPER, round shot for fowling-piece, about four times the size of buck-shot.
- MEALIE, sweet Indian corn, the chief food of the Kaffirs.
- MEERKAT (D), a small animal of the mongoose kind.
- MIDDLEVELD, properly MIDDELVELD (D), the mixed country lying between the Highveld and the Bushveld.
- MIMETIC CREATURES, that hide from danger by imitating their surroundings, *e.g.* a caterpillar that stiffens itself so as to look like a twig.
- NEKSTROP (D), the neck-strap, or reim, which, attached to the yokeskeys, keeps the yoke in place.
- NIX (D), nothing (from D. *niets*).
- ORIBI (N), a small antelope. Weight, 30 lbs.; height, 24 in.; horns, 6 in.
- OUTSPAN, properly UITSPAN (D), to unyoke or unharness; also the camp where one has outspanned, and places where it is customary, or by law permitted, to outspan.
- PANDA, properly 'MPANDE (N), the third of the great Zulu kings.
- PARTRIDGE, PHEASANT, names applied somewhat loosely to various species of francolin.
- PASSES, a written permission for a Kaffir to move from one district to another.
- PAUW (*pro. pow*) (D), the great bustard (*lit. peacock*).
- PEZULU (N), on top, up, above.
- PHONOGRAPH, an instrument for recording and reproducing sounds.
- POKER FLAT, ROARING CAMP, names of places in California described by Bret Harte. *Jack Hamlin* and *Yuba Bill* were men described by the same author.

- POORT (*pro.* pooh-rt) (D), a gap or gorge in a range of hills (*lit.* gate).
- PROSPECTOR, a man who travels through a country in search of metals, &c.
- QUAGGA, zebra (correctly applied to *Equus quagga*, now extinct, but still applied to the various species of zebra found in South Africa).
- REIM (*pro.* reem) (D), a stout strip of raw hide.
- REIMPJE (*pro.* reempy) (D), a small reim.
- RIETBUCK, properly (D) RIETBOK (*pro.* reet-buck), reed buck. Height, 3 ft. 6 in.; gross weight, 140 lbs.; horns, male only, up to 16 in.
- SABLE ANTELOPE. Habitat, Bushveld. Height, 4 ft. 6 in.; weight, 350 lbs.; horns, up to 48 in. on curve.
- SAKUBONA (N), Zulu equivalent of 'Good day.'
- SALTED HORSE, one which has had horse-sickness, and is thus considered immune (as in small-pox); hence 'salted' is freely used colloquially as meaning acclimatised, tough, hardened, &c.
- SCHANS (*pro.* skaans) (D), a stone or earth breastwork for defence, very common in old native wars.
- SCHELM (D), a rascal; like Scotch skellum.
- SCHERM (*pro.* skarem) (D), a protection of bush or trees, usually against wild animals.
- SJAMBOK (*pro.* in English shambok, in Dutch saam-bok) (D), a tapering raw-hide whip made from rhinoceros, hippopotamus, or giraffe skin.
- SKEY (*pro.* skay), a yokeskey; short for Dutch *jukskei*.
- SLOOT (D), a ditch.
- SPAN (D), a team.
- SPOOR (D), footprints; also a trail of man, animal, or vehicle.
- SPRINGBUCK, properly SPRINGBOK (D), a small antelope. Habitat, Highveld and other open grass country. Height, 30 in.; weight, up to 90 lbs.; horns, 19 in. (*lit.* jumping buck).
- SPRUIT (*pro.* sprait; also commonly, but incorrectly, sprout) (D), a stream.
- STEMBUCK, a small antelope. Height, 22 in.; weight, 25 lbs.; horns, 5 in.
- STOEP (*pro.* stoop) (D), a raised promenade or paved verandah in front or at sides of a house.
- TAMBUKI GRASS, also TAMBOOKIE, and sometimes TAMBUTI (N), a very rank grass; in places reaches 15 ft. high and stem diameter $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- TICK, or RHINOCEROS, BIRD, the 'ox-pecker.'
- TIGER. In South Africa the leopard is generally called a tiger; first so described by the Dutch—*tijger*.

TOCK-TOCKIE, a slow-moving beetle, incapable of flight. Gets its name from its means of signalling by rapping the abdomen on the ground.

TREK (D) (*lit.* to pull), to move off or go on a journey; a journey, an expedition—*e.g.* the Great Trek (or exodus of Boers from Cape Colony, 1836-48); also, and commonly, the time, distance, or journey from one outspan to another.

TREK GEAR, the traction gear, chain, yokes, &c., of a waggon. The Boer pioneers had no chains, and used reins plaited into a stout 'rope'; hence *trek-touw*, or pulling-rope.

TSESSEBE, an antelope, one of the hartebeeste family. Height, 48 in.; weight, 300 lbs.; horns, 15 in.

TSETSE-FLY, a grey fly, little larger than the common house-fly, whose bite is fatal to domesticated animals.

TWIGGLE, little people's word for the excited movement of a small dog's tail, believed to be a combination of wriggle and twiddle.

UMFAAN (N), a boy.

UMGANAAM (N), my friend.

UMLUNGU (N), the native word to describe a white man.

VELD (*pro.* felt) (D), the open or unoccupied country; uncultivated or grazing land.

VLEI (*pro.* flay) (D), a small, shallow lake, a swamp, a depression intermittently damp, a water meadow.

VOORLOOPER (D) (*lit.* front walker), the leader, the boy who leads the front oxen.

VOORSLAG (*pro.* foor-slaach) (D) (*lit.* front lash or skin), the strip of buck hide which forms the fine end of a whip-lash.

WATERBUCK. Height, 48 in.; weight, 350 lbs.; horns, males only, 36 in.

WILD DOG, the 'Cape hunting dog.'

WILDEBEESTE (*pro.* vill-de-beast) (D) (*lit.* wild cattle), the brindled gnu, blue wildebeeste. Height, 4 ft. 6 in.; weight, 400 lbs.; horns, 30 in.

WOLF, the usual name for the hyena, derived from *tijger-wolf*, the pure Dutch name for the spotted hyena.

WOODEN ORANGE, fruit of the klapper.

YOKESKEY, the wooden slat which, coupled by nekstrops, holds the yoke in place.

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